

G.W.F. Hegel

Critical Assessments

Edited by
Robert Stern

Volume III
Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and Logic

Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers



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VOLUME III

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Logic*



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Introduction

Robert Stern

Unless it is a system, a philosophy is not a scientific production. Unsystematic philosophizing can only be expected to give expression to personal peculiarities of mind, and has no principle for the regulation of its contents. Apart from their interdependence and organic union, the truths of philosophy are valueless, and must then be treated as baseless hypotheses, or personal convictions. Yet many philosophical treatises confine themselves to such an exposition of the opinions and sentiments of the author.¹

In the light of these remarks, it is unsurprising that Hegel's writings are distinctive for their systematic and all-inclusive character, and that his philosophical project came to be worked out in a series of closely inter-related texts. In terms of Hegel's mature philosophy, the first of these is the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was published in 1807, and which was originally conceived as an introduction to his completed system. Hegel had been attempting to construct such a system from around 1801 onwards, and it eventually came to comprise a logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit. Between 1812 and 1816 he published his *Science of Logic* in three parts, in which he developed the first element in this scheme, while in 1817 he published the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* in one volume, in which all three parts of the system are worked out. This became a three-volume work by the time of the third edition of 1830, made up of the *Encyclopaedia* (or 'Shorter') *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Spirit*. In 1821 Hegel published the *Philosophy of Right*, in which he elaborated further on the sections dealing with Objective Spirit that come towards the end of the third book of the *Encyclopaedia*. After Hegel's death in 1831, a group of his friends compiled an edition of his works in which his lectures on aesthetics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of history and history of philosophy

were published, all of which provide further discussion of specific parts of his philosophical edifice.

In terms of contemporary scholarship, all the elements that make up this edifice are currently under discussion and analysis, and critical debate ranges across the whole of the Hegelian corpus. The pieces contained in this volume and the one which follows illuminate all the different areas of Hegel's thought, each aspect of which continues to invite new and challenging readings. As a prelude, the aim of this Introduction and the next is to outline some of the central interpretative issues raised by the different parts of Hegel's philosophical system, in order to shed some preliminary light on the critical debates which follow.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit*

The relation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the rest of Hegel's system has become one of the most disputed aspects of Hegel scholarship, and opinions on this question vary widely: some claim his intentions changed as the work was written, some that he came to downgrade its importance in later work, and some that it was coherently planned and was meant to have a permanent and crucial role within his thought. Behind this apparently scholarly dispute there is a more significant philosophical issue: namely, whether the *Phenomenology* is essentially related to the *Encyclopaedia*, in being necessary for its justification, or whether it is a detachable propaedeutic to the completed system, which is in fact capable of standing on its own.² Various lines can be taken on this issue, each with different implications for the interpretation of Hegel's project as a whole.

Those who give the *Phenomenology* a justificatory role usually do so in relation to the *Logic*, arguing that the ontological claims of the latter require a refutation of Kant's transcendental scepticism, and that it is this which the *Phenomenology* is meant to provide. On this account, the *Phenomenology* is supposedly intended to act as an epistemological defence of Hegel's ontological stance with regard to the categories, by eliminating any possible gap between the world and our categorial scheme, and refuting any sceptical claims that such a gap would entail. None the less, while it might be allowed that Hegel's intention was to use the *Phenomenology* to overcome Kantian worries about the 'lack of fit' between our conceptual framework and the world, and to pave the way for the *Logic* by eliminating any significant opposition between subject and object, opinions can still differ over how Hegel meant this argument to work. At least three possible options present themselves.

The first option is that Hegel attempted to overcome the dualism of subject and object by showing consciousness that the object is in fact just itself objectified, that the object is just the self-mediation of the subject.

Once consciousness recognizes that what appears as given is in fact a product of the subject, then it will see that the idea of a thing-in-itself beyond our knowledge is unintelligible, as it is the subject which posits the objects to which the categories are then applied:

The immediate existence of Spirit, *consciousness*, contains the two moments of knowing and the objectivity negative to knowing. Since it is in this element [of consciousness] that Spirit develops itself and explicates its moments, these moments contain that antithesis, and they all appear as shapes of consciousness . . . Now, although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the 'I' and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject . . . With this, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is concluded. What Spirit prepares for itself in it, is the element of [true] knowing. In this element the moments of Spirit now spread themselves out in that *form of simplicity* which knows its object as its own self. They no longer fall apart into the antithesis of being and knowing, but remain in the single oneness of knowing; they are the True in the form of the True, and their difference is only the difference of content. Their movement, which organizes itself in this element into a whole, is *Logic* or *speculative philosophy*.³

As this passage seems to suggest, it is argued that the aim of the *Phenomenology* is to provide a foundation for the *Logic* by showing how the object is grounded in the self-mediation of the subject; without this idealistic argument, Hegel appears to believe that consciousness will always be plagued by the kind of sceptical worries to be found in Kant, namely, that the sort of categorical enterprise undertaken in the *Logic* cannot tell us anything about the nature of things as they are in themselves.

However, there are difficulties with this reading of the *Phenomenology*, which can make it seem that Hegel wanted to treat the object as a product of consciousness in such a way as to collapse the ontological distinction between the two.⁴ In the light of the rest of Hegel's writings, this approach appears too idealistic in a subjective sense: for, as has been pointed out,⁵ in the *Encyclopaedia* nature comes *prior* to the subject, making it difficult to accept the view that 'there is no reality apart from consciousness',⁶ which this reading would seem to entail. In fact, it is not even clear that the passage cited above licenses such an interpretation: all Hegel is claiming here (it could be argued) is that in testing its knowledge-claims, the 'other' against which consciousness compares itself must always be something of which consciousness is (in some sense) aware – but this

does not entail that this 'other' is in any way a product of the thinking subject, or 'posited' by the latter.

A second way of approaching the *Phenomenology* is to treat it as a form of transcendental argument, designed to show that there are certain features of reality which are necessary for self-conscious experience (such as ours) to be possible. Thus, for example, it could be argued that the aim of the Sense-Certainty section of the *Phenomenology* is to show that if reality were just made up of 'bare particulars' (i.e. particulars lacking in any universal properties), then consciousness could not have any experience of them, so that when Hegel criticizes this category in the *Logic*, he can ground this criticism in the transcendental argument of the *Phenomenology*. Likewise, the aim of the Master-Slave section is (on this account) to show that self-consciousness is only possible if there are other selves, thereby refuting solipsistic scepticism about the existence of other subjects outside the individual mind. Adopting this approach, one recent commentator has suggested that

Hegel believes that, as more adequate accounts of the conditions of apprehension and comprehension unfold, it will continue to be the case that the nature of possible *objects* of experience will also be progressively better illuminated. This means that Hegel thinks himself entitled to claim, as a result of his analysis [in the *Phenomenology*], that there cannot be indeterminate Being or mere presence (as an object of experience), and later that there cannot be just 'things with properties' there to be apprehended, there cannot be only 'forces' as conceived by the reflective understanding, and so on.⁷

In this way, it is suggested, the *Phenomenology* provides a form of transcendental justification for Hegel's claim that the categories of the *Logic* are constitutive of things.

However, it could be argued that while this appears to give the *Phenomenology* a strong justificatory role, in fact the argument cannot have the force that this role requires. For, all it shows is that in order for us to have conscious experiences, the phenomenal world – the world as it appears to us – must have certain features; but it does not follow that these features belong to the world as it really is. In order to show this, a much stronger form of transcendental argument is required, namely, that in order to *be* at all (not just in order to be experienced), reality must be differentiated, undergo change, and all the rest. Perhaps such an argument is provided by the *Logic*; but if so, it is hard to see why the *Phenomenology* is then needed to play the kind of justificatory function here being attributed to it.

Third, therefore, it might be said that the *Phenomenology* is more than just a transcendental argument relating to the possibility of experience:

it is also meant to provide an epistemological argument against transcendental scepticism by showing that the human mode of understanding can transcend all perspectival views of reality, so that we can be certain that how things appear to us coincides with how things are. On this account, it is said that Hegel is operating with a model of knowledge which Henry Allison has labelled 'theocentric',

according to which human knowledge is analysed and evaluated in terms of its conformity, or lack thereof, to the standard of cognition theoretically achievable by an 'absolute' or 'infinite intellect' . . . one that is not encumbered by the limitations of the human intellect, and which therefore knows objects 'as they are in themselves'.⁸

Interpreted in this light, Hegel's description of the *Phenomenology* as 'the ladder'⁹ to the absolute standpoint appears to suggest that its role is to lead consciousness beyond the intellectual distortions that limit our normal world-view, to a higher standpoint that transcends these limitations. This would provide an answer to Kantian scepticism by showing that our final picture of reality is not just one amongst others, relative to our conceptual scheme, but the one that coincides with the world viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, and so constitutes a form of absolute truth.¹⁰

It might be thought, however, that even if it was Hegel's intention to use the *Phenomenology* in this way, there is little hope of the argument succeeding. For, the claim ever to have *reached* this absolute standpoint is always going to remain contentious and problematic unless it can be shown that consciousness has attained some final grasp of how things are, which begs the question against the sceptic. One suggestion here might be that this is precisely the difficulty that Hegel hoped his method of immanent critique would resolve, by testing all forms of consciousness using 'internal' standards, and demonstrating that each non-scientific form of consciousness must converge on the standpoint of science. In this way, it could be said, Hegel tried to show that the standpoint of science can claim to be final without *assuming* correspondence, by undermining the sceptical possibility that there might be some coherent conception of the world other than Hegel's own:

By thus making demonstrable to each nonscientific viewpoint on the basis of its own views and criteria that 'all roads lead to Rome' – that all nonscientific viewpoints are implicitly committed to the truth of Philosophical Science in the sense that they can all be compelled to develop into Philosophical Science simply by drawing out consequences of the views and criteria which they already accept – the *Phenomenology* would effectively dispel any suggestion that Philosophical Science is arbitrary or artificial. The *Phenomenology* aims to show that, on the

contrary, in this special but strong sense Philosophical Science is a necessary viewpoint.¹¹

The difficulty with this strategy, however, is that the sceptic is unlikely to accept that the *Phenomenology* is rigorous enough to show that this is indeed the case, so that the possibility remains that there are alternative ways of viewing the world that Hegel does not cover, and which would not converge on his own.

In the face of the apparent failure of the *Phenomenology* to provide an adequate epistemological justification for the enterprise of the *Logic*, it could be argued that in fact this justification is to be found elsewhere (for example, in the introductory chapters of the *Logic* itself, where Hegel explicitly attacks Kantian scepticism),¹² and that the *Phenomenology* has another goal: namely, to reveal to consciousness that certain metaphysical assumptions play a vital role in all our thinking, and that once these assumptions are uncovered, something like the *Logic* is required in order to render our thinking coherent. On this view, the task of the *Phenomenology* is to get us to see the extent to which the various theoretical and practical standpoints of consciousness depend on metaphysical presuppositions that render these standpoints unstable, and this investigation is then meant to show 'natural consciousness' why an exercise like the *Logic* is necessary:

Everyone possesses and uses the wholly abstract category of *being*. The sun is in the sky; these grapes *are* ripe, and so on *ad infinitum*. Or, in a higher sphere of education [*Bildung*], we proceed to the relation of cause and effect, force and its manifestation, etc. All our knowledge and ideas are entwined with metaphysics like this and governed by it; it is the net which holds together all the concrete material which occupies us in our action and endeavour. But this net and its knots are sunk in our ordinary consciousness beneath numerous layers of stuff. This stuff comprises our own interests and the objects that are before our mind, while the universal threads of the net remain out of sight and are not explicitly made the object of our reflection.¹³

It could be argued that while the *Logic* is meant to subject these metaphysical categories to explicit investigation, the goal of the *Phenomenology* is to set the stage by showing 'our ordinary consciousness' how important such an investigation is, if it is to avoid falling into theoretical and practical confusions and *aporiai*. By the end of the *Phenomenology*, therefore, it is possible to see clearly how the categories we use provide the key to the 'experience of consciousness' as it passes through its various stages,¹⁴ and it is this insight that paves the way for the *Logic*.¹⁵ Thus, on this view, the role of the *Phenomenology* is less 'scientific' than

pragmatic: it is designed to show why the *Logic matters*, why its conclusions will make a difference to all our ways of thinking, both theoretical and practical, and how it might thereby bring the 'despair' of consciousness to an end.

It is possible, moreover, that Hegel could have thought this exercise was sufficient to provide a rational justification for the *Logic*, not by giving a transcendental argument for the categories, but by showing that Kantian scepticism about things-in-themselves is itself a product of ungrounded metaphysical assumptions, which the *Logic* then sets out to undermine. It is clear enough that Hegel did believe that Kant's transcendental idealism rests on certain metaphysical presuppositions – for example, that form and content are distinguishable, that the primary constituents of reality as we experience it are atomistic, that relations are ideal – and that these are precisely the presuppositions that are challenged in the *Logic*.¹⁶ On this view, therefore, the aim of the *Phenomenology* is not transcendental but therapeutic: the project is to show, not that reality must conform to our concepts, but that in our thinking on many matters – epistemology included – we are led into confusion by a certain metaphysical picture, while it is then the business of the *Logic* to derive a new way of conceptualizing things, through which this confusion can be resolved.¹⁷ In achieving this, the *Logic* is greatly helped by Hegel's account of the experience of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, as offering an historically and psychologically grounded demonstration of the ways in which untested metaphysical pictures have led the human mind into puzzlement and confusion, from which it is the task of the *Logic* to liberate us.

If this is the right way to interpret Hegel's project, there are two immediate difficulties that seem to arise. The first is that in order to carry out its task of revising the metaphysical outlook of 'natural consciousness', some valid picture of reality must *already* be in our possession, in order to make the revision rational. Hegel appears to have an answer to this objection, however: namely, it is possible to give rational grounds for rejecting some conception and preferring another *internally*, by showing that the latter represents a resolution of the problems, incoherences, anomalies, inconsistencies and limitations of the previous scheme or conception, without knowing for certain that this second conception is true. The second objection is that although some way of conceiving things may remove certain anomalies and puzzles, this is no justification for believing that this conception gives a more accurate picture of reality than its predecessor: for, the resolute sceptic can argue that doxastic coherence does not in itself provide a sufficient criterion for truth. Faced with this objection, it is possible to fall back on a reading of the *Phenomenology* as some sort of Kantian transcendental argument.¹⁸ There are other options, however, one of which is to provide a more robust defence of the coher-

ence theory of truth, and another of which is to question the intelligibility of this kind of scepticism: for if (and of course it is a big if) Hegel can show that there *is* a way of viewing the world which is free of all *aporiai*, then it is surely irrational to doubt this conception, given (*ex hypothesi*) that there are no questions which it leaves unanswered, no puzzles with which it cannot deal. This, at any rate, may have been the goal that he had in mind at the end of the *Phenomenology*, when he spoke there about the possibility of Absolute Knowledge.¹⁹

The Logic

Although, as with the *Phenomenology*, recent commentators disagree about the correct interpretation of the *Logic*, there is an underlying consensus that the nineteenth-century conception of this work was (in some sense) too 'metaphysical'.²⁰ As a result of this sea-change, there has been a renewal of interest in this part of Hegel's system, which was previously treated with considerable suspicion and scorn. However, commentators differ in how revisionary they are prepared to be in offering a 'non-metaphysical' interpretation, and over how plausible Hegel's position is, even when it is re-evaluated in this way.

When adopted in its weakest and least contentious form, proponents of this approach argue that the traditional picture of Hegel as a speculative cosmologist, seeking to deduce existence from essence, was misconceived, and that as a result our understanding of the *Logic* must be revised: it should no longer be interpreted in a Neoplatonic fashion, as an account of the ideal forms out of which the world was supposedly created, and so should be read 'non-metaphysically' in this sense. It is argued that his nineteenth-century critics were wrong to impute such cosmological ambitions to Hegel, and in doing so they grossly distorted his intentions in the *Logic*.²¹

However, while this might be accepted (although there are some troublesome passages that will require some explaining away),²² it could be said that the non-metaphysical approach should not be taken any further. In particular, it can be argued that while Hegel may not have been indulging in speculative cosmology, he was still engaged in speculative metaphysics in a broader, more Aristotelian sense, in so far as the *Logic* aims to tell us about the nature of what is through an ontological inquiry into the ultimate classes of being. Thus, on this view, Hegel's goal in the *Logic* is to show that some determinations of being (for example, being an individual) entail other determinations (for example, being an individual of a certain *kind*), and these determinations must therefore be related to one another in certain ways. Proceeding in this

manner, it could be argued, Hegel hoped to end up with a complete account of the basic ontological structure of what there is.

If one accepts this approach, however, there is still room for disagreement over how strong Hegel's position is meant to be. On the strongest reading, Hegel's aim was not just to show that reality has certain determinations: it was also to show that such determinations are *necessary* if there is to be anything at all. It is certainly possible to interpret the transition from Pure Being (*reines Sein*) to Determinate Being (*Dasein*) in this manner: for here Hegel might seem to be claiming that if anything is to *be*, it must be *in a certain way*, have certain qualitative features, otherwise it could not exist. However, this transcendental approach²³ seems too strong when the rest of the *Logic* is taken into account: it is argued that Hegel did not wish to claim (for example) that there must be *individuals* if there is to be anything.²⁴ It might therefore be said that Hegel's project is the weaker one of trying to show that there are certain fundamental categories which are adequate to determine what there is, while without these categories it is impossible to provide a proper characterization of reality as it exists.

While grounds can be given for this interpretation, it has not yet met with general acceptance because of an unwillingness to see Hegel as part of the traditional strand of realist thinking about ontology, as this neglects the place of subjectivity in his work, and makes his outlook appear implausibly pre-Kantian (or even pre-Cartesian). It is therefore argued that Hegel proceeds by a more idealist route, through an investigation into the transcendental conditions of experience and judgment, not through a realist inquiry into being; in this way, he is put closer to Kant than to Aristotle. However, it is said that Hegel can give his transcendental investigation ontological results by rejecting the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena, between how we experience the world and how it is in itself, so that 'in discovering the necessary relations between the categorial concepts of a transcendental logic, we will also be discovering the necessary structure of reality'.²⁵ It is therefore argued that while Hegel repudiates Kant's transcendental scepticism in the *Phenomenology*, his approach in the *Logic* remains Kantian in a broad sense, as he bases his claims about the nature of reality on the study of the categories that must be used in thinking, and so proceeds in an idealist fashion.

It is often said that where Hegel also departs from Kant is in the account he gives of how the thinking subject comes to *acquire* the concepts which are necessary for self-conscious experience: whereas Kant just treated them as given to each individual, for Hegel these concepts can only be determined through social interaction, as self-consciousness is only possible within a collectivity of subjects.²⁶ This explains why Hegel works at the level of *Geist*, which on this account loses its implications

of 'cosmic spirit', and is simply thought of as social consciousness: by employing this notion of *Geist*, it is suggested, Hegel abandons the fundamentally Cartesian assumption which Kant shared, that the categories with which we acquire the capacity to conceptualize reality are simply to be found subsisting immediately in each individually existing mind, and replaces it with a more socio-historical conception. The essential elements of this reading have therefore been summarized as 'Kantianism, minus the thing-in-itself, plus a social theory of mind'.²⁷

It could be argued, however, that on this reading Hegel's *Logic* is ambiguous, because it leaves open whether or not the categories can be warranted in a transcendental manner. Some have maintained that this was not Hegel's goal.²⁸ The claim here is that Hegel never suggested that there are necessary conditions for thought, and so never intended to show that certain categories *must* be used in order for self-conscious experience to be possible, and so *a fortiori* was not seeking to formulate a transcendental ontology on this basis. Rather, it is argued that Hegel's aim was much more modest: namely, to reconstruct rationally the way in which our concepts have evolved in an attempt to make the content of our experience *intelligible* to ourselves, without claiming that it *has to be* conceptualized in this way, using these categories; in general, it is just that by developing a certain way of thinking about reality, we have acquired a conception that is increasingly good at understanding our experience in a coherent, complete and explanatorily powerful way.

This immediately raises certain sceptical issues, however. The first (which has already been discussed above in connection with the *Phenomenology*) is whether or not by resolving various puzzles we are getting closer to a picture of the way the world really is. The second sceptical issue is rather different, but also raises a question that has troubled many readers of Hegel, namely: does Hegel believe that the *Logic* provides a *complete* and *final* key to the understanding of the world as we find it, and if so, is he right – and does the idea even make sense? Critics of Hegel's rationalism in this regard have argued that he did indeed mean his *Logic* to be conceptually closed, taking it to answer all the difficulties faced by the human understanding in comprehending itself and its world, thereby entirely overcoming the 'despair' of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*; others, however, have suggested that Hegel's project is more open-ended, allowing that there will always be new problems of understanding to be resolved via a continual process of conceptual readjustments and revisions.²⁹

At the very least, this debate shows that though Hegel's project may be (in some sense) non-metaphysical, it is still hugely ambitious, in trying to overcome all our conceptual difficulties in thinking about reality; it is also hugely challenging, in asking us to revise many of our commonly held metaphysical beliefs concerning how things are. It is of course a

matter for detailed analysis and argument to discover whether and how far this project can or does succeed.

Thus, in coming to terms with the questions brought out by this variety of interpretations, it appears that Hegel's work raises a spectrum of live issues in epistemology, ontology and metaphysics that his more dismissive critics have overlooked: moreover, it has increasingly been recognized that these issues were ones that Hegel himself sought to address, as he tried to work out and define his project. Although any final characterization of that project is likely to prove illusive, this is because the questions Hegel was trying to deal with remain ones that cannot be straightforwardly resolved: for this reason, interpretative controversy and debate seem set to continue, as appreciation grows for the many-sided nature of Hegel's philosophical vision, of which the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic* form vital parts.

Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), §14, p. 20.

2 For a discussion of these issues, see Otto Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Freiburg/Munich: Karl Alber, 1973), especially pp. 170–230, and Hans Friedrich Fulda, *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1965).

3 Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 21–2.

4 Of course, many interpreters of Hegel have argued that this was Hegel's intention. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), pp. 38–9: 'Of course, all his statements to the contrary notwithstanding, Hegel left the subject's primacy over the object unchallenged. It is disguised merely by the semi-theological word "spirit" with its indelible memories of individual subjectivity. The bill for this is presented in the excessive formality of Hegel's logic. According to its own concept it would have to be substantial, but the endeavour to make it all things at once, metaphysics as well as a doctrine of categories, resulted in the elimination of the definite being that might have legitimized its rudiment. In this respect Hegel is not so far removed from Kant and Fichte, whom he never tires of denouncing as spokesmen for abstract subjectivity.'

5 See Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* reprint edition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), p. 85: 'First, Nature mediates. That is Nature *itself*. It is by no means either a transcendent Idea of Nature or a subjective experience we may have of it. Nature as such may be "immediate", i.e., subject to both logical and spiritual mediation. It is, however, an "immediate Totality", i.e., a self-existent Whole in its own right, and persists in such self-existence throughout all mediation.'

6 R. C. Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel: A Study of G. W. F. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 192.

7 Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 124. cf. Robert B. Pippin, 'Hegel's phenomenological criticism', reprinted below, pp. 39–56.

8 Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 19.

9 Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 14.

10 As has been recently observed, many of Hegel's orthodox disciples in the nineteenth century, such as Karl Ludwig Michelet, took this theocratic model very literally: 'The redemptive power of Hegelian science, Michelet stated, was based on its ability to transcend the limited standpoint of "finite existence"'. It was "a science that exalts man and teaches him his highest calling" because it elevated the individual to a state of complete identification with the divine spirit. In the activity of philosophical comprehension man "carries the consciousness of God within himself", Michelet insisted, and "is thus elevated above the limitations of the world and lives eternally in the realm of truth" ' (John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path Towards Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 91). Cf. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §24Z, p. 44: 'Philosophy is knowledge, and it is through knowledge that man realizes his original vocation, to be the image of God.' For a discussion of this aspect of Hegel's conception of knowledge, see Robert L. Perkins, 'Perspectivity and objectivity: a critical clue to Hegel's epistemology', *The Owl of Minerva*, 20 (1989), pp. 165–82.

11 Michael N. Forster, *Hegel and Scepticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 169.

12 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §§40–5, pp. 65–73.

13 Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 27–8.

14 One advantage of this approach is that it explains why the *Phenomenology* includes much material that does not really bear on the epistemological issue: on this account, this material is there to demonstrate how far the whole range of our experience, including ethics, politics and religion, is underpinned by certain metaphysical categories.

15 See Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin/New York: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 34, 37: 'In life, the categories are *used*; from the honour of being contemplated for their own sakes they are degraded to the position where they *serve* in the creation and exchange of ideas involved in intellectual exercise on a living content . . . /As impulses [*als Triebe*] the categories are only instinctively active. At first they enter consciousness separately and so are variable and mutually confusing; consequently they afford to mind only a fragmentary and uncertain actuality; the loftier business of logic therefore is to clarify [*zu reinigen*] these categories and in them to raise mind to freedom and truth.'

16 For further details of how Hegel sought to overturn Kant's underlying metaphysical outlook, see my *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990).

17 Not without a certain irony, Hegel credits Kant with being one of the first to investigate the categories of metaphysics in this way: 'A very important step was undoubtedly made, when the terms of the old metaphysics were subjected to scrutiny. The plain thinker pursued his unsuspecting way in those categories which had offered themselves naturally. It never occurred to him to ask to what extent these categories had a value and authority of their own. If, as has been said, it is characteristic of free thought to allow no assumptions to pass unques-

tioned, the old metaphysicians were not free thinkers. They accepted their categories as they were, without further trouble, as an *a priori* datum, not yet tested by reflection. The Critical philosophy reversed this. Kant undertook to examine how far the forms of thought were capable of leading to the knowledge of truth' (Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §41, p. 66).

18 In this connection, it is interesting to note that Terry Irwin has recently resorted to a Kantian reading of Aristotle in response to this sort of sceptical objection: see T. H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). For a critique of this reading, see Robert Wardy, 'Transcendental dialectic', *Phronesis*, 36 (1991), pp. 88–106.

19 I am not claiming that Hegel's position as interpreted here is successful in rebutting all sceptical attacks: I am merely suggesting that it is a position he might reasonably be said to have held. One remaining sceptical worry might be this: that there could be two (or more) incompatible conceptions that are equally good at resolving *aporiai*, and yet which are incommensurable. It may be that Hegel believed that by being exhaustive, the *Phenomenology* showed that this was not possible. Another worry might be that although we believe that some conception answers all our puzzles in conceiving the world, and is therefore warranted by us as being true, there might be *other* puzzles, unknown to us and unanswered by this conception, that it *cannot* answer: can Hegel show that by resolving all the *aporiai* that we are aware of in our world-view, this conception has provided a solution to all that there are?

20 The two works that have been most influential in creating this new orthodoxy are Klaus Hartmann, 'Hegel: a non-metaphysical view', reprinted below, pp. 243–58 and J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958). For a critique of Findlay's position, see Michael Rosen, 'From *Vorstellung* to thought: is a "non-metaphysical" view of Hegel possible?', reprinted below, pp. 329–44. Anticipations of aspects of this non-metaphysical approach can be found in the articles by D. G. Ritchie and J. Ellis McTaggart, reprinted above, Volume II, pp. 41–59 and 60–88.

21 For a selection of writings by Hegel's nineteenth-century critics, most of whom shared this picture of Hegel as a speculative cosmologist, see above, Volume I.

22 See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 50: 'Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil, and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind.'

23 I am here using 'transcendental' in its broadest, not necessarily Kantian, sense: so, where Kant used the term 'transcendental' in connection with the necessary conditions of possible *experience*, I am here using 'transcendental' to mean the necessary conditions for the possibility of X, where X need not be experience, but could also be being. Of course, it is an interesting issue whether transcendental arguments of any sort are workable.

24 Note, however, that this would still be weaker than the cosmological (Schellingian) interpretation: here, Hegel would be giving necessary conditions for being, but would not be trying to show that being itself is necessary.

25 Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 227.

26 On some interpretations, parallels are drawn between Hegel's position and the recent claims made by Habermas, Lorenzen and others that all knowledge and rationality is dialogical and hence intersubjective: see Habermas, 'Labour

and interaction: remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind*', reprinted above, Volume II, pp. 558–81 and Michael Theunissen, *Sein and Schein: Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978). For a discussion of this approach, see Robert R. Williams, 'Hegel's concept of *Geist*', reprinted below, pp. 538–54.

27 Richard Norman, *Hegel's Phenomenology: A Philosophical Introduction* (New Jersey: Humanities Press/Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981), p. 112.

28 Something like this approach is adopted by Terry Pinkard: see 'Hegel's idealism and Hegel's Logic', reprinted below, pp. 478–94.

29 Cf. Terry Pinkard, 'The categorial satisfaction of self-reflexive reason', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 19 (1989), pp. 5–17, pp. 11–12: 'We can take [Hegel's] dialectical philosophy to rest on a more modest thesis, something like this: here are the resolutions of *our* problems of categorial possibility; there will no doubt be new ones that emerge, but we cannot foresee that. Hegel could thus have been open to new conceptual developments in history while at the same time maintaining the belief that he had indeed resolved the problems he faced.'

The Phenomenology of Spirit

Hegel's phenomenological method*

Kenley Royce Dove

There is probably no aspect of 'Hegelianism' which has attracted more attention and occasioned more confusion than the so-called dialectical method. Every university student has doubtless heard at least one lecture of this 'secret' of Hegelianism, whether in terms of the notorious triad – thesis–antithesis–synthesis – or in some sophisticated terminology. This is particularly noteworthy, not only because it misrepresents Hegel, but because Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* was probably the first philosophical treatise whose method was radically and consistently non-dialectical.¹

What, then, is the method of Hegel's *Phenomenology* if it is not dialectical? In so far as it can be characterized in a word, it is *descriptive*. The study of science, in Hegel's sense, requires that the student, through a tremendous effort of restraint, give himself completely over to the structural development of this science itself. This, I take it, is what Hegel means by the famous phrase 'die Anstrengung des Begriffs' ('the effort of the concept') (*Phän.* 48). The true philosopher must strenuously avoid the temptation of interrupting the immanent development of the subject matter by the introjection of interpretative models; he must, rather, give up this instinctively felt prerogative or 'freedom', and 'instead of being the arbitrarily moving principle of the content', his task is 'to submerge this freedom *in* the content and let the content be moved through its own nature, that is, through the self as the self of the content, and to observe the movement' (*Phän.* 48).

But if the phenomenological method must not interfere with the movement of the subject matter, it must also abstain from a purely negative attitude *vis-à-vis* all content, for example, the stance of the disengaged analyst who removes all life from the content, going straight after its truth value by a more or less elaborate and systematic employment of the formal criterion of tautologyhood. This methodological device, which

is of unquestionable value in the mathematical sciences, is totally inadequate in the field of philosophy. The abstract affirmations and negations envinced by a two-valued logic of tautological truths versus non-tautological falsehoods *eo ipso* exclude from consideration the characteristics of negation inherent in the subject matter itself. And it is precisely this internal negative movement which the Hegelian phenomenological method seeks to describe.

Since this method excludes the central criterion of formal or mathematical logic, it is natural to ask what sort of standard Hegel proposes to put in its stead. His answer to this question, which constitutes the theme of the brief but all-important Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, is also the clearest indication of his radical departure from the previous history of Western philosophy. He acknowledges that if the *Phenomenology* were to be regarded as an exposition in which science is *related* to knowledge as it appears, or as an inquiry into the nature of human understanding or reason, then it would indeed require, after the manner of a Locke or a Kant, some sort of fundamental presupposition which could serve as a standard of measurement (*Phän.* 70; *HCE* 18). But instead of adapting himself to this classical philosophical orientation, Hegel (to borrow a phrase from Kierkegaard) has found a way of 'going beyond Socrates' – and Kant as well.² Unlike that of any previous philosophy, the method of Hegel's *Phenomenology* takes the 'paradox of learning' of Plato's *Meno* (80d) in complete seriousness: 'But here, where science makes its first appearance, neither science nor anything else has justified itself as the essence or as the in-itself' (*Phän.* 70; *HCE* 18).

The argument of the Introduction divides itself at this point into three compact and organically inseparable moments. The *first* concerns the abstract distinction between knowledge and truth on which all previous epistemological theories have turned. This distinction is based upon the observation that consciousness itself 'distinguishes from itself something to which it at the same time relates itself' (*Phän.* 70; *HCE* 19). The *determinate* aspect of this interrelationship, the something which is said to be for consciousness, the 'being-for-another', is called knowledge. But, on further consideration, we also notice the side of that which is determined, namely, the *determinable*. Or, to employ the expression of Brentano, consciousness is always consciousness *of*. This aspect of 'being-in-itself', whether regarded as a material thing, an abstract entity, or a thing-in-itself, has tended to be associated in philosophical theory with *truth*, and philosophers have accordingly sought to establish criteria for determining the truth of knowledge.

It is particularly important to notice that Hegel does not join in this time-honoured enterprise. From the viewpoint of the *Phenomenology*, the question of the truth *of* knowledge is not a matter of direct concern; it is, in the modern idiom, 'bracketed'. The only object with which the

Phenomenology is concerned is knowledge as it appears, already organized in the form of a 'science' involving some systematic distinction between knowledge and truth.³ If, on the contrary, we were to concern ourselves with the truth *of* knowledge, that is with what knowledge is in itself, then we should have to provide some standard whereby that truth could be determined. But it is clear that the truth thus attained, if indeed any such knowledge could be acquired, would not be the truth of knowledge, its being-in-itself; it could at most be *our* knowledge of it or its being-for-us. Moreover, as Hegel observes, the standard would be *our* standard, and that for which our standard was to serve as a determinate 'would not necessarily have to recognize it' (*Phän.* 71; *HCE* 20).

The *first* moment of Hegel's methodological exposition therefore serves as a preliminary elucidation of what is implied by undertaking a phenomenological description of knowledge as it appears (*Phän.* 66; *HCE* 13). Since the object of our inquiry is knowing, any distinction on our part between subject and object would be a playing with mere abstractions. *Our* object is at once and inseparably both the object-knowing subject and the object known-by-the-subject. Thus our object, consciousness or spirit, contains this subject-object distinction within itself and requires no further distinction by us.

The *second* moment of Hegel's argument is equally far-reaching and revolutionary, though its philosophical significance can be no more than adumbrated here. It directly concerns the Concept (*Begriff*),⁴ but it also involves a radically new insight into the perennial problem of time and eternity. Just as the object of knowledge is seen to fall *within* the object of *our* inquiry, Hegel also makes the unprecedented move of regarding the Concept as something completely within the temporal process of the consciousness or spirit under investigation.⁵ Thus the Concept is not regarded as, in the Parmenidean tradition, identical with timeless eternity, or, after the manner of Plato or Whitehead, as an eternal object which 'participates' or 'ingresses' in the temporal realm of human experience or 'actual occasions'. It is also to be distinguished from the Aristotelian and Nietzschean interpretation of the Concept as something which, although falling within time, for example, as a 'natural kind', nevertheless undergoes a cyclical process of eternal recurrence within time itself. For Hegel the Concept is time, and time is 'the existentially embodied Concept itself' (*Phän.* 558).⁶

Since the Concept is seen to fall within the knowledge we are investigating, it follows that 'consciousness provides itself with its own standard, and the investigation will accordingly be a comparison of consciousness with its own self' (*Phän.* 71; *HCE* 20). To understand how this comparison takes place we must observe that just as consciousness or spirit was seen to be at once both 'subjective' and 'objective', this same duality holds true for the Concept: consciousness itself distinguishes between (a)

the Concept qua knowledge and (b) the Concept qua object. Hence there is within consciousness not only something which is taken to be *for it*; consciousness also assumes that that which is for it is in-itself and has an independent status as well. Accordingly, we see that the Concept has two moments. If we take the Concept to be knowledge, then the standard for this Concept qua knowledge will be its object or what is said to exist in-itself. In this case the comparison will consist in seeing whether the Concept corresponds to the object, that is what consciousness regards as the standard of truth. But, on the other hand, if we take the Concept to be the object as it is essentially or in-itself, then the Concept itself will be the standard for the Concept qua known, that is the Concept as object of knowledge. Here the comparison consists in seeing whether the Concept qua known or qua object corresponds to the Concept itself.⁷

Although both aspects of the Concept must no doubt be taken into account in any adequate description of the knowing process – and an emphasis on one or the other has traditionally served as the touchstone for a realist or idealist epistemology⁸ – Hegel's descriptive method seems, in this second moment of its explication, to be in danger of losing its purely descriptive character in virtue of the necessity of *our* determining which aspect of the Concept is to serve as the standard.

His answer to this problem is as simple as it is convincing, especially when the reader has followed the presentation through the section called 'Consciousness'. He observes, namely, that both of these processes are the same. The standard is selected by consciousness itself, and, since both moments of the process fall within our object, that is knowledge as it appears, any selection of standards on *our* part would be superfluous.⁹ Needless to say, the adoption of such a purley descriptive stance does require a great deal of restraint; it is not the traditional way of 'doing' philosophy.

The *third* moment in the development of Hegel's phenomenological method is guided by the observation that consciousness not only selects its own standard but is also the *comparison* of its knowledge with its own standard. This is based on the fact that consciousness is 'on the one hand, consciousness of the object, on the other, consciousness of itself; it is consciousness of what to it is the true, and consciousness of its knowledge of this truth' (*Phän.* 72; *HCE* 21). Consciousness is therefore both consciousness of something, and consciousness of its self.¹⁰ In view of this characteristic feature of consciousness, it is at the same time conscious of its standard of truth and conscious of its knowledge of the truth in question. Since both the standard and the knowledge are for the same consciousness, their comparison is a fundamental feature in the movement of consciousness itself.

It is indeed true that consciousness' standard of truth is only a standard in so far as it is known by consciousness, as it is *for* consciousness and

not as it is in itself. This observation has driven many less descriptive philosophers to some form of scepticism, for the presumptive standard does not really seem to be what it 'ought' to be (namely, something independent of knowledge). Hence it seems incapable of serving as a criterion of knowledge. But for Hegel, whose attention is steadfastly focused on the experience of knowledge as it appears, all such talk about 'capacities' and 'intentions' is beside the point.¹¹ The crucial point is that consciousness, in all the shapes of its appearance, *does* draw a distinction between its standard, or what the object is in itself, and its knowledge, or the being of the object *for* consciousness (*Phän.* 72; *HCE* 22). If, in the course of the comparison, consciousness should find that its standard and its knowledge do not correspond, it will, on the basis of its own assumptions, have to change its knowledge in order to make it correspond to its standard.

But it also follows from these assumptions that a change in consciousness' knowledge *eo ipso* involves a change in its standard, for the standard was based upon the object, indeed, the object as known. Hence with a change in the knowledge for the sake of truth, the standard of truth is itself changed. Consciousness thus discovers that the process in which it placed its knowledge in *doubt*, all the while certain that it held a firm criterion for what the object of its knowledge was in-itself, turns out to be a movement in which it loses its own truth; the 'path of doubt' (*Zweifel*) is transformed into 'the way of despair' (*Verzweiflung*) (*Phän.* 67; *HCE* 14). Moreover, this despair is not something arbitrarily imposed on consciousness from without; it is *immanent* in the very movement of consciousness itself. Thus, in Baillie's poignant translation, consciousness 'suffers this violence at its own hands'.¹²

The positive aspect of this third moment of Hegel's method is that the process of examining knowledge, which of necessity involves a standard, is actually (and equally necessarily) an examination of the standard as well. And with the emergence of a new standard, consciousness is confronted by an object which is for it new and now true. At this point in the exposition, one is, nevertheless, compelled to ask, 'Whence this new object?' or, more sceptically, 'Isn't Hegel here attempting to justify that sleight-of-hand trick for which his dialectical method is so notorious?'

If this 'new object' is in fact the product of Hegel's 'dialectical method', the traditional charge against him is completely justified. But Hegel's method is radically *undialectical*. It is the experience of consciousness itself which is dialectical, and Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a viable philosophical enterprise precisely to the extent that it merely *describes* this dialectical process. The 'new object' therefore must not be introduced by the philosopher; it must arise out of the course of the experience described – and not merely *as* described, but through itself.

Experience itself is therefore described as dialectical to the extent that

it generates new objects for itself. But the 'new object' seems to be no more than a reflection on the part of consciousness, a reflection which is not based on anything objective, but merely on its knowledge of its first object. The term 'reflection', however, is misleading; it tends to suggest something which takes place immediately. But experience is a *process*, something which takes time; and the process of experience is *constituted* by the alternation of its first object, and therewith its first standard. The alteration, in turn, must be seen as a negation of the *appearance* of the first object within consciousness' experience. Thus the negating process of alteration is not an immediate, empty or abstract negation; the appearance which is negated has content and the alteration is a *determinate* negation (*Phän.* 68; *HCE* 16), which, as the result of the negated appearance, also has a *content*.

Thus the 'new object' is not simply the product of an immediate reflection; it is constituted by the process of negating the first object; 'it is the experience constituted through that first object' (*Phän.* 73; *HCE* 24). But Hegel's concept of determinate negation can only be grasped through a careful analysis of (1) the role of appearance in experience and (2) why 'we' must describe the experience of consciousness as a phenomenon.

Hegel's concept of experience is both more restrictive and at the same time far more inclusive than what is usually understood by the word. The intelligibility of the entire *Phenomenology* hinges upon a firm grasp of what phenomenal experience, knowing as it appears, consists in. In the first place, phenomenal experience is more restrictive than other philosophical interpretations of experience because experience, to be described as a phenomenon, must *appear*. Thus mere intentions, capacities, dispositions, meanings etc. do not, as such, constitute experience. In so far as such 'mental entities' are recognized as the real content of experience, the attempt at phenomenological description is condemned to acknowledge the validity of Prufrock's claim: 'That is not it at all, that is not what I meant, at all'; or the equally enigmatic 'meaning' which is presumably expressed in the assertion 'The present King of France is bald'.

For Hegel, on the contrary, genuine experience *is* a self-revealing process, and philosophy is conceived as a description of this process, not as a systematic analysis of a presumed relationship between meanings and assertions. Experience is constituted by an *act*, something actually said or done. Experience is therefore revealed in language and work, and what is so revealed can be *described*: it is an *act*, 'and it can be *said* of it, what *it is*' (*Phän.* 236). In the act the 'inexpressible meaning' is simply abolished, that is it is expressed.

But if this restriction of experience to that which can be described appears to be a narrowing of what philosophers have usually understood by the term, the wealth of human experience¹³ actually described in the

Phenomenology is a most eloquent demonstration that Hegel's method is far more 'empirical' than that of the philosophers who call themselves 'empiricists'.¹⁴

There are basically two kinds of phenomenal experience described in the *Phenomenology*: first, the acts of individual men considered in abstraction from their social and linguistic 'world', and second, the interaction of individuals within a community or a 'world' in the course of its development (*Phän.* 315). This emphasis on the forms of experience in terms of the nature of the acting subject suggests a systematic division of the *Phenomenology* into two parts.¹⁵ The first, covering the sections called 'Consciousness', 'Self-Consciousness' and 'Reason', is a phenomenological description of man as individual or 'natural consciousness', in the various shapes (*Gestalten*) of his theoretical (in language) and practical (through labour and work) struggle for truth. The second, spanning the sections from 'Spirit' through 'Religion' to 'Absolute Knowledge', concerns the sequence of shapes assumed by man in his life with other men, or, man as spirit. Although Hegel himself is not entirely consistent in his account of the relations between 'Spirit' and 'Religion' (compare *Phän.* 476 with 557), it is clear that the entire second half of the *Phenomenology* deals with the development of associated humanity. 'All of the previous shapes of consciousness are abstractions from Spirit. . . . This abstractive isolating of such moments presupposes Spirit and requires Spirit for its subsistence' (*Phän.* 314).

We have seen that the most critical precondition for a phenomenological description of experience is the actual *appearance* of experience itself. But the term 'appearance' has two distinct usages in the *Phenomenology*, and Hegel's phenomenological method is bound to seem either exotic or capricious if these two usages are not distinguished. The first of these concerns the appearance of experience; the second concerns appearance *in* experience. A great deal of what is unique, and consequently 'unfamiliar', about Hegel's method is based on his insight into and his consistent awareness of this twofold character of appearance throughout the *Phenomenology*. The appearance *of* experience is the condition necessary for the possibility of a phenomenological description. It is the basic presupposition of the *Phenomenology* as a philosophical work. This presupposition must also be shared by the reader. We shall discuss this problem of the appearance *of* experience in section B below. Here attention will be directed to the problem of appearance as it is revealed *within* experience.

The experiencing subject, either as an individual or a community, tacitly or explicitly presupposes a distinction between appearance and reality (*Wesen*), between its knowledge and its standard. Appearance as such is taken to be something involving time; reality is felt to be something which is at least in principle timeless or somehow eternal (cf. *Phän.*

558). But as long as this sense of the unchangeable remains a mere feeling, there is no experience in the proper sense of the word. Human experience must involve action. It must involve an expression of the inwardly felt reality – which as such is no reality. This is what Hegel means by an *act*: it is the revelation of 'reality' through the process of letting it appear. Action, in turn, has two basic phenomenal forms: language and work.

Both forms of action entail an objectification of what is otherwise merely 'meant', 'intended' or 'presumed' to be. Consequently the subject who actively expresses himself in the world of appearance puts himself at the same time under the *risk* that his sense of reality will be altered or perverted (*Phän.* 237). The risk, however, is inevitable for the experiencing subject; the only seeming alternative is a solipsism of the present moment. But this is only theoretically conceivable as a 'philosophical' stance which one tacitly 'intends' or 'means' to assume. As Hegel demonstrates in his opening chapter on 'Sense-certainty', it is impossible for this solipsism to say what it 'means' because any saying involves *language*, and language is a form of expression or objectification. But as objectified, such a 'meaning' is patently contradicted: the solipsist's 'here and now', once it has been written down, becomes a 'there and then'. In its actual appearance, in language, 'meaning' must mix with time; and by this process its semblance of atemporal reality is simply negated.

But a negation of meaning-solipsism in no way entails a negation of that sense of eternal reality for which the language of sense-certainty is merely the most immediate expression. The entire course of human experience, both individual and collective, can be viewed as a series of progressively less immediate and more mediated expressions of this quest for certainty and truth, in the form of something which will not, like Chronos, be devoured by Zeus.

Thus, with the negation of meaning-solipsism the process of letting appear begins once again. But this beginning of appearance within experience is not the same as its antecedent. The experiencing subject has changed; it has become a new subject through its objective activity. Perhaps it itself does not explicitly know this, but 'we' do – and not because we have some special access to the inner recesses of its consciousness akin to that of the 'omniscient narrator', which was once such a popular device of novelists.

The *Phenomenology* is not a work of that sort; in method of presentation as well as in subject matter it is far more comparable to a dramatic work.¹⁶ Like all literature, it is an expression in language; but unlike 'ordinary language' and the language of pre-Hegelian philosophers, it is purely descriptive. The course of the dramatic development is only describable because it has appeared; because there have been actual

appearances within experiences and because these appearances are susceptible of being discussed and have been discussed. Under these circumstances the development of human activity and the continual dialogue about human activity can be *comprehended* by those who have a descriptive guide and who are able to master the art of reading scientific descriptions. The guide in question is the *Phenomenology*. We shall now turn to the problem of its readers.

2

The reader's most obvious source of difficulty stems, of course, from the external literary form of the *Phenomenology*. It is at best a very peculiar kind of *Lesedrama*. But the dramatic development itself is systematically interrupted by what may be described – in the felicitous phrase of Brecht – as a *Verfremdungseffekt* (estrangement-effect).¹⁷ Every reader of the *Phenomenology* has doubtless puzzled over the significance of the *wir* and the *für uns* which periodically come into view and break up the flow of experience described. In the Preface, before the actual drama gets under way, it is clear that the 'we' is to be taken in the sense familiar to readers of almost any philosophical work, namely, we philosophers who are following the argument in question.

The Introduction may be viewed as a transition from the ordinary philosophical usage of an editorial 'we' to the problematical usage of the work itself. Here Hegel comes closest to giving an explicit account of how the term 'we' is to be understood in the sequel. Yet even at this juncture the reader is forced to ask himself: 'Who are "we"?'

The problem seems to become critical at two points in particular. The first concerns the determination of what shall serve as a standard within experience: object or Concept (at *Phän.* 71; *HCE* 20). Hegel at first seems to suggest that 'we' make the selection. But as the previous discussion has shown, he provides an answer which, in principle, preserves the purely descriptive character of his method. The second difficulty (at *Phän.* 74; *HCE* 24) is, unfortunately, not so easily answered.

We have already seen the general relationship of consciousness to its object, the twofold character of the Concept, and how in the course of experience consciousness brings about both an examination of its standard and emergence of a new object. All of this is intelligible as a process which takes place within experience. We have also seen that experience itself involves, by its very nature, action and appearance. Thus the process of experience is not constituted by any hidden or 'inner' meanings or intentions. It is in principle describable. The problem which now emerges is that what is *for* consciousness a new object is *for us* a new attitude towards objectivity, a new shape or *Gestalt* of consciousness or spirit. In

other words, whereas consciousness itself merely seems to be related to a new object appearing *within* experience, from *our* point of view, the description of the appearance *of* experience, consciousness, the active protagonist, has itself changed.

'This way of observing the subject matter is *our* contribution; it does not exist for the consciousness which we observe. But when viewed in this way the sequence of experiences constituted by consciousness is raised to the level of a scientific progression' (*Phän.* 74; *HCE* 24). On the one hand, therefore, 'we' seem to be merely describing what the active experience of consciousness presents for phenomenological description. On the other hand, however, 'our' observation is also seen to be an act (*unsere Zutat*) which plays a constitutive role in the drama as a whole. Moreover, as Hegel adds, without 'our contribution', the drama of human experience could only have a sceptical conclusion, or rather no conclusion at all.

In view of these considerations, the descriptive character of the whole *Phenomenology* seems to become paradoxical, if not impossible. For if our observation is regarded as totally determined by the subject matter, the development of appearance within experience, then 'we' may indeed observe the coming to be and passing away of various objects of experience, but the upshot would be no more than a chronicle tracing a formless flow of phenomenal content. In so far as the description concerned historical phenomena, our viewpoint would be that of a sceptical relativism or historicism. This has in fact been a popular characterization of what Hegel's mature philosophy of history – minus the Absolute Idea – implies. When we consider the radical temporalization of the Concept in the *Phenomenology*, together with the conspicuous absence of talk about the Absolute Idea, the method of this work seems to entail a distinctively relativistic orientation for the 'we'.

If on the other hand our description of the sequence of objects experienced is raised to the level of a scientific series simply because of the fact that it is 'we' who do the describing, that the description is *unsere Zutat*, then 'we' seem to be nothing short of the Absolute itself. Either our description would be carried out *sub specie aeternitatis*, or 'our' addition would have the significance of an arbitrary positing, or both.

Hegel's phenomenological method, for all its cogency in the treatment of appearance *in* experience, thus seems to entail an impossible dilemma with respect to the no less important and complementary question of the appearance *of* experience. Between the Scylla of relativism and the Charybdis of constructive metaphysics there seems to be no safe passage. In view of the critical nature of this problem, it will be worth while to consider at this point what Hegel scholars have had to say about the 'we' in the *Phenomenology*.

As one might expect, Hegel's use of the term 'we' in the *Phenomen-*

ology has been recognized by most of his commentators as, in one way or another, in need of an explanation.¹⁸ The explanations usually provided are, however, remarkably laconic. It will therefore be feasible to expedite our brief survey of these explanations by presenting and commenting on a selection of relevant quotations from the literature. In several cases the passages cited are coextensive with the total direct discussion of the problem in the work referred to:

Herbert Marcuse: The reader who is to understand the various parts of the work must already dwell in the 'element of philosophy'. The 'We' that appears so often denotes not everyday men but philosophers.¹⁹

Georg Lukács: The characteristic mode of exposition consists in always clarifying for the reader that connection of the objective and subjective categories which remains hidden to the individual 'shape of consciousness' then under consideration. . . . The dualism exists only for the 'shapes of consciousness', not for the philosopher and consequently not for the reader. When Hegel . . . says that the decisive connections between the objectivity and subjectivity are opaque for the 'shapes of consciousness' but transparent *for us*, he means for the philosophical reader, who observes this process of evolution of the human genus from a higher plane.²⁰

Nicolai Hartmann: With the term 'we' Hegel means the accompanying philosophical comprehension. And therein lies the possibility for philosophy, in tracing the origination [of a new shape of consciousness], to grasp its necessity as well. For it is in virtue of this possibility that 'this road to science is itself already a science', a science of the experience of the consciousness.²¹

Jean Hyppolite: That is why the necessity of the experience which consciousness undergoes presents itself under a double light, or rather that there are two necessities, that of the negation of the object, brought also by consciousness itself in its experience, in the examination of its knowledge, and that of the appearance of the new object which is formed through the earlier experience. (This necessity could be called *retrospective*.) This second necessity only belongs to the philosopher who re-thinks the phenomenological development; there is in it a moment of the in-itself, or 'for us' which is not to be found in consciousness. . . . (The *Phenomenology* is *theory of knowledge* and at the same time *speculative philosophy*; but it is speculative philosophy only for us . . . which means that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is at the same time a *description* of phenomenal consciousness and a *comprehension* of this description by the philosopher.) . . . (The succession of the 'experiences' of consciousness is this contingent only for phenomenal consciousness. As for us who are gathering these experiences, we

discover at the same time the necessity of the progression, which goes from the one to the other. The *Phenomenology* demonstrates the immanence of all experience in consciousness. Moreover, it must be recognized that this (synthetic) necessity is not always easy to grasp and the transition sometimes appears arbitrary to the modern reader. This transition also poses the problem of the connection between history and the *Phenomenology*.)²²

Richard Kroner: In the *Phenomenology* there are thus two moving series running parallel to each other: that of the observed object, the wandering 'soul' which passes from experience to experience, and that of the observer who surveys this progress from the end of the road and comprehends it as the self-actualization of the Absolute. Each step which 'natural' consciousness advances thus becomes a doubly necessary one; or *the necessity of each step appears under a double light*. On the one hand consciousness is urged forward on the basis of its own experience . . . on the other hand, however, the necessity of the first self-movement is placed into the light of Absolute Knowledge and is comprehended as a necessity by the observer who has already reached that goal towards which consciousness directs itself and which in truth attracts the wandering ego to itself.²³

Martin Heidegger: Who are the 'we'?

They are those who in the inversion of natural consciousness let it persist in its own meaning and opinion but at the same time and expressly look at the appearance of the appearing. This looking-at, which expressly watches the appearance, is the watching as which the *skepsis* fulfills itself, the *skepsis* which has looked ahead to the absoluteness of the absolute and has in advance provided itself with it. That which comes to light in thoroughgoing skepticism shows itself 'for us', i.e. for those who, thinking upon the beingness of being, are already provided with Being. . . .

The contribution accordingly wills the will of the absolute. The contribution itself is what is willed by the absoluteness of the absolute. . . . The contribution gives prominence to the fact that and the manner in which we, in watching, are akin to the absoluteness of the absolute.²⁴

The passages here assembled provide an instructive spectrum of possibilities for envisaging the 'philosophical we', but they also show how an interpretation of the 'we' tends to govern – or be governed by – one's view of the *Phenomenology* as a whole. The following discussion will thus enable us not only to survey the field of Hegel scholarship through the prism of this vital issue; it will also afford an occasion for systematically developing the argument of this essay.

The first point of critical importance which, consciously or uncon-

sciously, divides these scholars is the degree of significance they attach to the inverted commas which they place around the 'we' or 'for us'. Only Marcuse and Lukács draw explicit attention to the fact that the 'we' refers to the readers of the *Phenomenology*. Thus the problem of the intelligibility of the dramatic activity to the 'audience' is elevated to a position of prominence. When the 'we' is understood to denote readers such as 'you and I', then the *Verfremdungseffekt* serves to remind us first that we are the public, the audience, and second, that *what* we as audience are seeing or have seen is an appearance in public space.²⁵ This prevents us from losing our descriptive perspective by, for example, becoming absorbed in the public action of the play as if it were the private experience of a protagonist.²⁶ It does not, on the other hand, estrange us from the standpoint of description, tacitly or explicitly suggesting that the 'we' stands for some extraordinary intelligence which we readers see through a glass but darkly.

Marcuse's observation that the intelligibility of the *Phenomenology* is only open to those readers who 'already dwell in the "element of philosophy"' is clearly incontestable, but it is not clear from his remarks just what this 'element' is. In a subsequent passage, he suggests that this 'element' is the philosophy of transcendental idealism. But this is also problematical, since, as Hartmann points out, transcendental idealism is not accepted in the *Phenomenology* as a thesis but is rather treated as a historical phenomenon, one of the stages of consciousness described.²⁷ Although Hyppolite mentions the peculiar difficulties faced by 'the modern reader' in following the translation in the *Phenomenology*, as well as the problematical relationship of the *Phenomenology* and history, his extensive study has little to say about the specific preconditions for intelligible reading, whether in 1946 or 1807.²⁸

The only writer who directly deals with the problem is Lukács. He suggests that the appearance of the various 'shapes of consciousness' is intelligible for the philosophical reader because he (the 'we') observes the developmental process of the human genus from a 'higher plane'. The higher plane is said to be that of 'objective Spirit' or the perspective of history.²⁹ This historical approach to the problem of the 'we' is very suggestive, but in Lukács' discussion it has two distinct shortcomings as a general hypothesis: (i) the specific nature of the historical preconditions for the 'we' is not developed (for example, in connection with Hegel's references on pages 15ff. of his Preface to 'our age', c. 1806, as a 'new world'), and (ii) Lukács expressly limits this interpretation of the 'we' to what he calls the 'first part' of the *Phenomenology*, 'Subjective Spirit'.³⁰ For the second and third parts of his triadically divided *Phenomenology* he offers no explanation for the 'philosophical we' – which nevertheless continues to appear.

The citation from Hartmann adds to this discussion a recognition of the

problem of 'our' grasping the 'necessity' in the sequence of consciousness' experiences, thus enabling 'us' to raise this sequence to a scientific series, 'a science of the experience of consciousness'. But it is only Kroner and Hyppolite who develop the problem of the *structure* of 'necessity' in the *Phenomenology*. In the terminology of this study, both scholars recognize that there is (a) a process of necessity *within* experience, the process in which consciousness judges its knowledge by its own standard and consequently tests its standard and alters its object, as well as (b) the necessity *of* experience as a non-contingent series observed by us. As the foregoing discussion has shown, it is this second kind of necessity which is most problematical and crucial for an understanding of the philosophical 'we'.

It is noteworthy that, of the two, only Hyppolite speaks of this second necessity in terms of *appearance*. But it is an appearance of a peculiarly 'retrospective' nature. The 'we' or the philosopher is said to be already (and not merely implicitly) at the level of 'speculative philosophy' and, on Hyppolite's reading, the appearance *of* experience seems to provide the philosopher with something like an *occasion* to rethink the phenomenological development, which he has presumably already, in some sense, experienced. In view of the historical preconditions for 'our' phenomenological comprehension suggested by Hegel in his Preface, this is at least a partially plausible assumption. One is, however, led to ask Hyppolite whether the standpoint of 'speculative philosophy' is itself attainable without having *first* rethought the phenomenological development presented in the *Phenomenology*. This surely would seem to follow from Hegel's description of the *Phenomenology* as an *introduction*, and a necessary introduction, to speculative philosophy or, since for Hegel they are equivalent, to Logic (*Phän.* 33).³¹ Hegel observes that the *System der Erfahrung des Geistes* ('System of the experience of the spirit') only embraces the *appearance* of this experience (*Phän.* 33), and he clearly does not set down systematic philosophy as a precondition for grasping the systematic character of this experience. It is manifest that the reverse of this is proposed.³²

If then our critique of Hyppolite has hit its mark, Kroner's interpretation of the philosophical observer, or 'we', is even less viable. Not mentioning the problem of the *appearance of* experience, he asserts that the 'we' grasps the necessity in the sequence of natural consciousness' experiences from the standpoint of the goal towards which it is striving, from the *end* of its pathway, which the 'we' recognizes as the 'self-realization of the Absolute'. Kroner's version of the 'we' has already arrived at the level of Absolute Knowledge. But if this interpretation were accepted, one could give no plausible answer to Hegel's 'rhetorical' question: 'one might simply dispense with the negative as something *false*

and thus demand to be led to the truth without further ado; why bother oneself about that which is false?' (*Phän.* 33).

The most detailed and provocative interpretation of the 'we' problem in Hegel's *Phenomenology* is found in Heidegger's essay, *Hegel's Concept of Experience*. He alone explicitly poses the question 'Who are the "we"'?', and his answer to the question constitutes the heart of his proposal for a reading of the entire book.³³ Like the other commentators, Heidegger assumes that the 'we' has some kind of privileged access to the Absolute. But the superiority of the 'we' over natural consciousness is not attributed to its 'higher' historical standpoint (Lukács) or to its ultimately mystical and irrational intuition (Kroner). Heidegger's account is distinguished by the claim that the 'we' is akin to the Absolute through the fact that it lets consciousness be, that it keeps its own standards out of the self-investigation of consciousness. No one has seen more clearly than Heidegger that 'our contribution' consists in the act of restraint in the face of the appearance of experienced, that 'our contribution' is the omission of all contributions (*Holz.* 174; *HCE* 128).

The peculiarity of Heidegger's interpretation is found in his tendency to identify the 'we' of the *Phenomenology* with the fundamental ontologist of his own writings. Thus he refers to the consciousness described in the *Phenomenology*, natural consciousness, as 'ontic consciousness' (*Holz.* 161; *HCE* 105), whereas the 'we' is said to think 'the Beingness of being' and to be therefore 'already provided with Being (*Sein*)'. Heidegger accordingly reads the *Phenomenology* as 'a dialogue between ontic and ontological consciousness' (*Holz.* 185; *HCE* 144), or between natural consciousness and Absolute Knowledge (*Holz.* 186; *HCE* 146). This dialogue is precisely what he regards as Hegel's concept of experience. The 'we' is said to be receptive to that ontological dimension of consciousness' experience which remains invisible for natural or ontic consciousness because what appears *within* this experience excludes the appearance of experience for consciousness. But the 'we', in its 'thoroughgoing scepticism', does not interfere with the appearance *within* consciousness' experience and thus lets the 'new object', and therewith the Being of experience itself, appear.

Heidegger's interpretation rests upon his contention that the term 'Being' may be used to refer to what Hegel calls spirit (*Holz.* 142; *HCE* 69). But Hegel's sense of Being (spirit) is said to suffer from the forgetfulness characteristic of post-Socratic metaphysics in that Being is implicitly regarded as *will* (*Holz.* 187f.; *HCE* 148f., and *Holz.* 120, *HCE* 30). The ontological knowledge of the 'we' is therefore defective because (i) it has not yet made explicit and radicalized the traditional metaphysics of Being as will (an achievement Heidegger attributes to Nietzsche's writings on the will-to-power), and (ii) it has not yet grasped the necessity of systematically destroying traditional metaphysics (the task which Heidegger

egger himself claims to have undertaken). But Heidegger's interpretation of spirit in the *Phenomenology* as Being, and Being as Will, rests upon his interpretation of the 'we' as a mode of consciousness. For him, 'Everything depends upon thinking the experience mentioned here [in the *Phenomenology*] as the Being of consciousness (Holz. 171; HCE 121).

The safest generalization about Heidegger's essay is that it uses the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* as a touchstone for elucidating some important elements of his own fundamental ontology. As such it is a valuable document for the student who seeks to grasp the relationship between *Sein und Zeit* and the 'late' Heidegger. And while it is in many respects a stimulating exercise for the Hegel student, it can be singularly misleading if taken literally as a commentary on the *Phenomenology*. For the *Phenomenology* is *not* an ontology (Hegel's *Logic* may be properly spoken of as his ontology);³⁴ it is a *phenomenology* and can only be understood if it is read as such.³⁵

The most remarkable feature of Heidegger's interpretation of the philosophical 'we' is that it focuses upon the dark passage in the next last page of the Introduction dealing with *unsere Zutat* (Phän. 74; HCE 24-5). But perhaps this is not so remarkable after all, for when we look closely at the studies of Kroner, Hartmann, and Hyppolite, we find that their definitive utterances on the 'we' also take the form of analyses of Phän. 74. It seems to this writer a matter of no mean consequence that four of the six scholars cited tend so to limit their attention in defining a term on whose comprehension intelligibility in reading the *Phenomenology* hinges. If, in addition, one recalls Hegel's frequent critical comments on prefaces and introductions to philosophical works, it is reasonable to assume that he too would be highly sceptical of a general definition which is based on a passage where, in the language of contemporary semantical theory, the term is, from the viewpoint of the work as a whole, metalinguistically 'mentioned' rather than dramatically 'used'.

In point of fact, the term 'we' and its variants are *used* repeatedly throughout the *Phenomenology*. Rather than adding any further speculations on the 'real' meaning of *unsere Zutat*, perhaps it might be more fruitful to arrive at a comprehension of who 'we' are through the process of 'working the matter out'. In the following paragraphs certain working hypotheses will be stated, but these can only be provisional; their only verification can be an enhanced comprehension on the part of the reader who works his way through the *Phenomenology* itself.

First, let us gather together the helpful suggestions which have emerged from our view of Hegel scholarship.

(1) Following Marcuse, our attention must be fixed on the problem of *intelligibility* in the *Phenomenology* and (2) with Lukács this intelligibility is to be sought, in so far as possible, in connection with the specific

prerequisites for comprehension by 'us' as intelligent (but also human) readers. (3) As Hyppolite has pointed out, certain of these prerequisites are *historical*. (4) All the while, we must not forget that, as Hartmann observes, 'we' must grasp the *necessity* in the development of the described consciousness' experiences. It will be of singular importance to comprehend just what this necessity consists in. (5) But our comprehension of this necessity will be clouded if we neglect to distinguish between the *two* parallel processes of necessity at work in the *Phenomenology*, as Kroner indicates.

The first and absolutely essential stage in the actualization of the reader's already implicitly philosophical (in Hegel's sense) comprehension (that is the first of the two processes of necessity) is found in working through the section called 'Consciousness' (*Phen.* I–III). It is here that Hegel shows that the 'we', contra Heidegger, cannot be understood as a mode of consciousness, for in his explication of the result of 'Consciousness' (*Phän.* 133–40) the 'we' comes to see that the 'I' of consciousness is first *constituted* through the interaction of the 'we' and that the unity in question in the *Phenomenology* is not (as in Heidegger) the unity of consciousness and Being but the 'spiritual unity' in reciprocal recognition. It is this 'spiritual unity' which constitutes the Concept of spirit (*Phän.* 140–1). But the way out of consciousness' meaning-solipsism cannot be simply 'pointed out'; it must be worked through. In doing so, the reader must note Hegel's peculiar use of the word 'we' in this section. For it is only in 'Consciousness' (and in subsequent references back to *Phen.* I–III) that the 'we' is seen to play the role (*zum Bei-spiel*) of the consciousness presented, to *speak* for it and *write* for it (*Phän.* 81), immediately and passively *observe* for it (*Phän.* 85), as well as perceive for it (*Phän.* 95), and actively participate in its Concept (*Phän.* 103).³⁶ Moreover, 'we' are able so to relate ourselves, not because it is some primordial experience and the 'we' is 'the Absoluteness of the Absolute' (with Heidegger), or because the 'we' is a speculative Hegelian philosopher (with Hyppolite), or because the 'we' enjoys the privileged access of Absolute Knowledge (with Kroner). Both the consciousness in question and 'we' ourselves are already in the element of *pre-Hegelian* philosophy.³⁷ Indeed, the section called 'Consciousness' is the most clearly philosophical of the entire work – when philosophy is understood as the theory of knowledge. And this is so because it must enable its readers to get beyond 'philosophy', beyond the 'love of knowledge' and thus to begin to know (*Phän.* 12).

Hegel, contrary to many a legend, demonstrates in the *Phenomenology* a great respect for his readers. This, rather than his reputedly esoteric and didactic style, is a more probable source of 'unintelligibility' to the readers of the *Phenomenology*. He recognized that the individual reader has 'the right to demand that science at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint [the element of philosophy], and show him this

standpoint within himself' (*Phän.* 25). The ladder which Hegel extends in the opening three chapters of the *Phenomenology* is a 'ladder language' quite unlike that of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. It *does* enable 'our' theoretical orientation to rise above the level of solipsism, mystical or otherwise, because it destroys the 'myth of meaning' underlying the 'paradox of learning' which has plagued philosophical thought since Socrates.

In these chapters Hegel shows that meaning remains a myth and learning remains paradoxical as long as the ultimate subject is taken to have the egological structure of consciousness. Consciousness *is* dialectical because it presumes to give an account of its experience in terms of the ego and its other. But by playing the role of consciousness, *we* come to see at the end of chapter III of the *Phenomenology* that consciousness' attempt at self-explication results, when pushed to the limit, in an inversion of consciousness and its world (*Phän.* 121ff.). To see this inversion is 'our contribution', an act of restraint through which we are finally able to relinquish the standpoint of consciousness.

We may agree with Heidegger that the *Phenomenology* presents us with a dialogue. But the protagonists are not the ontic and ontological modes of consciousness' experience. They are rather consciousness and spirit. The dialogue itself is consciousness' (not Hegel's) voyage to the discovery that it *is* spirit. For *us*, this dramatic dialogue begins when the Concept of spirit reveals itself to us (*Phän.* 140), when we no longer take ourselves to be substitution instances of the protagonist consciousness. Heidegger's brilliant exposition of the Introduction founders on just this issue. He fails to see that the Concept of spirit is inexplicable in terms of consciousness or its ontic and ontological modalities of experience. The 'I' of consciousness must rather be grasped as constituted through the 'we' of spirit. And when 'we', the readers of the *Phenomenology*, grasp this, the 'we' becomes, for the first time, 'we' in Hegel's distinctive sense of the world. As such, 'we' are able to witness the dialogue between consciousness and spirit through which consciousness works out in concrete detail (*Phen.* IV–VIII) what 'we' have come to grasp merely *ex negativo* and in principle (*Phen.* I–III).

In the concluding paragraph of the Introduction, Hegel says

consciousness will reach a point (*Punkt*) at which it casts off the semblance of being burdened by something alien to it, something which is only *for* it and which exists as an other. In other words, at that point where its appearance becomes equal to its essence, consciousness' presentation of itself will therefore converge with this very same point in the authentic science of Spirit.

(*Phän.* 75; *HCE* 26)

The suggestion which follows from the argument of this essay is that the

'point' referred to is the transition to chapter IV of the *Phenomenology*. 'In self-consciousness, as the Concept of spirit, consciousness has for the first time reached its turning-point (*Wendungspunkt*)' (*Phän.* 140).

These texts suggest that the *method* of Hegel's *Phenomenology* is developed in two stages. The first (*Phen.* I–III) is a dialogue between consciousness and the 'we' in which the 'we' participates. The result of this dialogue is that consciousness, through its inversion, comes to present itself to us as the appearance of experience, whose essence (spirit) we no longer distinguish from its appearance. Since we no longer interfere with consciousness (as at *Phän.* 81, 85, 95, 103), 'our contribution' becomes 'the pure act of observation' (*Phän.* 72; *HCE* 21). The second stage (*Phen.* IV–VIII) is accordingly 'the authentic science of spirit', the *Phenomenology of Spirit* rather than consciousness. At this point we have grasped the essence of consciousness.

The Introduction ends with these words: 'And finally, when consciousness itself grasps this its essence, it will indicate the nature of absolute knowledge itself' (*Phän.* 75; *HCE* 26).

Notes

* All page references to the *Phenomenology* are to the edition prepared by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1948), and are indicated in the text by the designation *Phän.* A new translation of the Introduction to Hegel's *Phenomenology* by the present author has been published in Martin Heidegger's *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York, 1970). References to this translation will be indicated by *HCE*.

1 Although scores of commentators, from Trendelenburg to Findlay, have denied the Hegel employed a consistently dialectical method (claiming on the contrary that his thought only attains its apparent dynamic through surreptitious appeals to experience), Ivan Iljin was, so far as I am aware, the first to develop the insight that 'Hegel in his philosophical method was no dialectician' (*Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre* (Bern, 1946), 126). Iljin's argument persuasive though it is, does not focus on the *Phenomenology*, but deals rather with Hegel's authorship as a whole.

2 Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, II, Teil: *Hegel* (Berlin, 1929: 1960).

3 The term 'science' is not to be taken merely in the restrictive sense of the natural sciences or any other formally organized discipline – although these too will come into view. What Hegel means by *Wissenschaft* here is a specific shape or *Gestalt* of consciousness or spirit which is itself constituted by a systematic mode of relating form and content, certainty and truth, subject and substance. Thus '*die Sittlichkeit*' is just as much a science as 'psychology'.

4 In view of the radical novelty of Hegel's use of the term *Begriff*, it is tempting to avoid translating it as 'Concept', the most obvious choice. Wallace and Baillie have presented cogent arguments for the term 'notion'. It has the advantage of suggesting a kinship with the Greek *nous*, and it has a systematic precedent in

Berkeley's *Siris*. Unfortunately the term carries with it irrepressible connotations of vagueness and imprecision.

5 For a discussion of the Concept qua known by the philosophical 'we', see pp. 25ff. of the present chapter.

6 See also *Phän.* 38: 'As to time . . . it is the existentially embodied Concept itself.' Both these passages are given an extensive and illuminating interpretation in A. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, ed. Raymond Queneau (Paris, 1947).

7 Hegel has in this analysis developed an important insight into the problematic relationship between the positive and negative senses of the Kantian thing-in-itself; that is of the thing-in-itself as object (that which according to the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' is said to be known) and the thing-in-itself as noumenon. From the perspective of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, there is no unambiguous answer to Jacobi's well-known charges that Kant tried, against his own strictures, to have it both ways.

8 For Hegel's most explicit discussion of this question, see his Jena lectures of 1803-4, first published as *Jenenser Realphilosophie I* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1932). See 214ff.

9 In view of the endless polemics among Marxists and critics of Marx on the question of the 'Hegelian method', it is interesting to note that this 'method' is quite indifferent to the rival claims of idealism on the one hand and realism on the other.

10 This second aspect of consciousness must not be simply identified with that of the *Phenomenology* explicitly called 'Self-consciousness'. As a moment of human knowing, self-consciousness is a factor, however much explicitly emphasized, throughout the entire course of experience from 'Sense-certainty' to 'Absolute Knowledge'. But this aspect of human experience is not grasped by the reader of the *Phenomenology* before he has followed the argument *through* the chapter on *Verstand* (N.B. *Phän.* 128). As we shall see, an understanding of this characteristic feature of the *Phenomenology* is essential for demystification of the philosophical 'we'; or, which is another way of expressing the same problem, it is essential to the intelligibility of the *Phenomenology* as a philosophical work.

11 For a complementary formulation of this important methodological issue, see Hegel's Jena lectures of 1803-4, op. cit., 200.

12 See Baillie's translation of the *Phenomenology* (London, 1931), 138.

13 Richard Kroner suggests that *Erleben* would be a more adequate term for what Hegel describes as experience. See his *Von Kant bis Hegel*, Vol. II: *Von der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie des Geistes* (Tübingen, 1924), 374.

14 This argument is forcefully developed by George Schrader in 'Hegel's Contribution to Phenomenology', *The Monist*, 48 (1964), 18-33.

15 The structure of the *Phenomenology* is so complex that nothing short of a detailed commentary could possibly do it justice. It is interesting to note that Hyppolite's well-known commentary on the work divides into the two parts indicated above. See Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*, 2 vols (Paris, 1946), 40 *et passim*. But Hyppolite's contention on page 55 that 'the *Phenomenology* was for Hegel, consciously or unconsciously, the means to deliver to the public, not a complete system, but the history of his own philosophical development' seems to commit that intentional fallacy which Hegel subjected to such a devastating criticism (*Phän.* 227-301). The most elaborate structural interpretation of the *Phenomenology* is given in the third appendix to Kojève's lectures, op. cit., 574-95. These pages are now available in an English

translation by Kenley and Christa Dove in Alexandre Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York, 1969), 261–87.

16 Among existing works of drama, the one which immediately suggests itself for comparison is Goethe's *Faust*. An elaboration of this comparison between the *Phenomenology* and *Faust* may be found in George Lukács, *Goethe und seine Zeit* (Bern, 1947), and in Ernst Bloch, 'Das Faust-Motiv in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*,' *Hegel-Studien*, 1 (1961), 155–71.

17 See Bertold Brecht, *Schriften zum Theater* (Frankfurt, 1957).

18 The problem of the 'we' has, however, received scant attention in Marxist-orientated studies dealing with the *Phenomenology*. It is, for example, not even mentioned by Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt: Erläuterungen zu Hegel* (Frankfurt, 1951: 1962).

19 Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1960), 94.

20 G. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel: Über die Beziehungen von Dialektik und Ökonomie* (Zürich and Vienna, 1948). The translation of this passage and the others through the Heidegger excerpt are mine.

21 Hartmann, op. cit., 317.

22 Hyppolite, op. cit., 29–30. See also 81 and 104.

23 Kroner, op. cit., 369–70.

24 Heidegger, *Holzwege*, (Frankfurt, 1950), 173 and 175.

25 The most frequent contexts for the appearance of 'we' in the main body of the *Phenomenology* are 'Jetzt sehen wir' or 'wir sehen'.

26 Jacob Loewenberg's imaginative proposal that the 'we' engages in an alternating process of 'historically impersonating' consciousness and experiencing its 'comic denouement' systematically encourages this misunderstanding. The argument is formulated by Loewenberg's Introduction to the Scribner edition of *Hegel Selections* (New York, 1929), in his two *Mind* articles (October 1934 and January 1935) and in *Hegel's Phenomenology: Dialogues in the Life of Mind* (La Salle, Ill. (1965). Emil Fackenheim suggests that the reader of the *Phenomenology* is not the 'we' but 'must, as it were, hover between the viewing and the viewed standpoints' (*The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington, Ind., 1967), 36). Unfortunately the notion of 'hovering' is never clearly formulated in Fackenheim's interesting book.

27 Hartmann, op. cit., 338.

28 Hyppolite does, however, offer a clue to answering this problem in a subsequent remark which does not directly deal with the problem of the philosophical 'we'. He writes: 'But it is only the *universal individuality*, that which has been able to lift itself to absolute knowledge, which must find again in it and develop in itself the moments implied in its becoming. It is the same consciousness which, having reached philosophical knowledge, turns back upon itself and which, as empirical consciousness, goes upon the phenomenological itinerary. In order to indicate to others the road of absolute knowledge, it must find it back in itself. . . . That which for it is reminiscence and interiorization must be for the others the road of their ascension. But this individuality itself, as far as it is individuality, carries necessarily elements of particularity; it is bound to time and for it the French Revolution or the period of enlightenment have more importance than other historical events. Isn't there an irreducible contingency in this?' (Hyppolite, op. cit., 50. Cf. 80).

29 Lukács divides the *Phenomenology* according to the Triad of Spirit in the *Encyclopaedia*.

30 Lukács, op. cit., 602.

31 Hyppolite takes up the question of the relationship of the *Phenomenology*

to the *Logic* in the last chapter of his commentary. His discussion includes for this reader a novel argument showing how the *Logic* may be regarded as the standpoint 'für uns' in the *Phenomenology* at the *Phenomenology*, reciprocally, as the standpoint 'für uns' and the *Logic*. Cf. Hyppolite, op. cit., 560ff. But this discussion also leaves unanswered the problem of the philosophical 'we' qua reader in the *Phenomenology*.

32 See also *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 25ff. and *Wissenschaft der Logik*, I, 30 (Lasson edition, Leipzig, 1923).

33 Heidegger, op. cit., 188. An English translation appears in Heidegger's *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York, 1970), 149. References to *Holzwege* in the following paragraphs will be indicated by *Holz.* and to the English translation by *HCE*.

34 See Heidegger's discussion of the *Logic* in his *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen, 1957).

35 See T. W. Adorno's critique of Heidegger's Hegel interpretation in his *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt, 1963), 69.

36 This is the only section of the *Phenomenology* which presents any *prima facie* grounds for Loewenberg's interpretative notion of 'histrionic impersonation'. It is perhaps worth noting that Loewenberg's *Mind* articles, mentioned above (footnote 26), written thirty years before his commentary on the *Phenomenology* as a whole, developed the 'histrionic' thesis in connection with analysis focusing on *Phenomenology*, I-III.

37 The term 'pre-Hegelian' is to be understood in a systematic and not merely a chronological sense.

Hegel's phenomenological criticism*

Robert B. Pippin

Hegel's spectacular claim at the end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to have arrived at an 'absolute knowledge', a knowledge he calls the 'last shape of spirit', spirit which gives to the 'complete and true content the form of itself'.¹ Characterizations of this final *Gestalt*, and the status of its 'finality', vary greatly in Hegel. He often claims to have achieved this 'absolute' standpoint by presenting a *logos* of the phenomenon of science or logos itself, a 'phenomenology' of spirit. This account of all possible account-givings is said, not without ambiguity, finally to overcome consciousness' 'negative' relation to itself and so to issue in a total 'self-consciousness'. If we read the *Phenomenology* as consistent with the demands first made in the *Differenzschrift* of 1801, Hegel has fulfilled his intention by providing a *Wissenschaft des Wissens*, and so has performed an 'Absolute Reflection', or a reflection on reflection itself.² Such intriguing, but tortuously phrased claims have always prompted numerous questions, many of them concerning the paradoxes of self-reference, totality and completeness familiar to philosophy since the Platonic discussions of 'wisdom'. Indeed, it is precisely such paradoxes that Hegel claims to have overcome in overcoming 'reflection', the essential 'instrument' of philosophy.³ As a preliminary attempt to understand such claims. I attempt to do two things in the following and then to draw some conclusions. First, I interpret this well-known Hegelian claim to 'self-consciousness' as a comment upon, and finally as a criticism of, what has today become, from this Hegelian perspective, the 'non-dialectical' distinction between knowledge and transcendental knowledge, knowledge and 'criticism', or finally, especially today, the 'object level' and the 'meta-level'. In this respect, Hegel's comments, and especially his comments on Kant and the paradoxes of reflection, are relevant to many contemporary systematic attempts to formulate and defend that distinction. Second, to understand the unique Hegelian nature of this claim for self-conscious-

ness, rather than survey isolated and often obscure passages about the system as a whole, I argue that a useful strategy is to look directly at the claim *within* the *Phenomenology* that consciousness *must become* self-consciousness. If some clarity about the status of that 'must' and the nature of that 'move' can be made, then the formal nature of the Hegelian self-consciousness should be greatly illuminated.

That is, it is often remarked that Hegel wanted to avoid the mere givenness of Kant's transcendental subject, to 'show' the unity of apperception as the truth of consciousness and so to avoid the methodological incompleteness of the Kantian system (perpetuated in Fichte by his *Sollen*).⁴ Such a completed self-consciousness clearly, though, needs its own 'defence', and we want to determine here the manner in which Hegel thought he could argue *for* such a completion, and the extent to which he was successful. We shall claim that Hegel attempts such an argument by a kind of 'phenomenological criticism', an analysis that is both descriptive of the 'phenomenon' of knowledge *and* justificatory or transcendental, that one notable Hegelian *Aufhebung* is his overcoming of the dualism between the Kantian *quid facti* and *quid iuris*.

But, as just indicated, the first step in understanding 'transcendental discourse' in Hegel is to return straightaway to Kant and his case for the necessity of a 'prior' transcendental, or second-level, reflective philosophy.

I

Ever since Kant proposed his transcendental turn, philosophy has, in one way or another, often been concerned to articulate and defend one of his founding distinctions. In his own terms that distinction involves the different concerns of 'knowledge' and a 'critique of knowledge', especially a critique of reason's often erroneous claim to *be* knowledge. Kant saw himself as a philosophical revolutionary, finally completing the modern enterprise in philosophy not merely 'to know', but to know that and how we know; or, to be fully 'self-conscious'. Such an attempt would protect us against the naivety of dogmatism, especially ancient dogmatism, while rescuing us from scepticism. And, it was surely Kant who, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, demonstrated at least the necessary *priority* of a transcendental philosophy, a philosophy of reflection, or knowledge about the limits of knowledge.⁵

Hegel too, throughout the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, accepts the fact that without some form of critical 'reflection' on the status of any claim to know, the 'bare assertions' left form only a 'system of opinion and prejudice', doomed to a 'highway of despair'.⁶ As indicated, however, our point here is to understand the unique Hegelian status of

such a critical *Grundlegung*, since his acceptance of the transcendental principle in no way commits him to a Kantian interpretation of criticism. Such a clarification is especially important in the light of the apparently 'epistemological' status of the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*, almost as if in preparation for the dialectical *Bewegung* of spirit. In fact, that is precisely not what Hegel has in mind; he claims that his acceptance of the 'how is knowledge possible?' question in no way binds him to an attempt to answer that question independently of, and so prior to, 'actual' attempts to know.

But the Kantian origins of this issue thus reveal a problem with the distinction itself between knowledge *simpliciter* and a reflection *on* knowledge, a problem that was crucial for Hegel's avowed 'correction' of Kant. For, on the one hand, Hegel's most frequent characterization of his own system of absolute knowledge is that it is fully 'self-conscious' knowledge,⁷ a characterization that among many others indicates his great debt to Kant. But, on the other hand, as the opening arguments of the *Phenomenology's* Introduction show, Hegel is highly critical of the transcendental standpoint, encouraging us to distrust the distrust that seemed to make a 'critical' preparation necessary. Our first task, then, in understanding what seems to be a transcendental inquiry of a unique variety, is to formulate Hegel's criticism of Kant's self-conscious inquiry, and then to formulate and respond to Hegel's own attempt to overcome the limitations set by those criticisms by a 'phenomenology of spirit'.

But a qualification is needed before proceeding. It is often noted today that a transcendental analysis can claim to do far less than, in the manner of Kant, defend objectivity. But we can quickly see that any restriction to Strawsonian descriptive standards does not affect Hegel's demand for self-consciousness. A 'meta-ethical' analysis, for example, cannot claim simply to bring to self-consciousness what is implicit in ethical discourse, without also having to be self-conscious about what *it* is doing. (It must be able to define and *defend* standards of correct description, without merely describing those standards.) Even as non-corrective meta-inquiry, or as purely descriptive analysis, such an enterprise does not merely repeat what happens on the object level. Precisely because it examines what it itself claims is 'implicit' or 'hidden' or simply not present, its claim to reveal correctly these absent preconceptions must be defensible to avoid arbitrariness. Even if we claim that the *results* we arrive at are themselves non-defensible or pre-rational, that is even if we decide that the intentions or reasons for positing certain axioms in an object-level system have only a conventionalist status, we are still appealing to a distinction between knowing the conditions for knowledge as different from knowing simply, given some set of conditions. And the former must be defensible as knowledge in some sense. To return to our Kantian framework, it is especially necessary for a critical epistemology to justify

reflectively its own criteria for a knowledge of knowledge. Those criteria are especially relevant if we wish to illuminate what is *true* or sensible in some object-level knowledge, as *opposed* to what merely seems to be true, but is actually false, or really meaningless. Thus, we cannot claim, say, to replace a rationalist dogmatism with some critically grounded or properly analysed knowledge if criticism or analysis itself is ungrounded, or if itself is merely methodological dogmatism. But if this distinction holds, and the 'different' concerns of each level must be maintained independently, it is hard to see how we can give an account of the terms, criteria of success, kinds of inference etc. made on a transcendental level without again raising the same problem on simply *another* level.⁸ We seem bound to regress or beg the question.

Hegel states this problem in various ways, quite often directing his remarks to Kant. The first fully philosophic indication of the issue is the *Differenzschrift* of 1801.⁹ Hegel here pays tribute to the great advance made by Kant's transcendental idealism in coming close to overcoming the dualism between subject and object by demonstrating that the meaning of objectivity 'depended' in various ways on the truth of 'subjectivity'; that the unity or cognitive status of an event or object known was possible only on the assumption of conditions necessary for there being *one* self-conscious subject. Kant had explained and powerfully defended the 'unity' or identity of self-consciousness as the 'truth' of empirical knowledge. Or, in Kant's characteristically terse phrase: 'the object is that in the concept of which the manifold is united.' Hegel goes so far in his agreement with Kant here as to say, 'The fundamental principle (*Grundprinzip*) is thoroughly transcendental.'¹⁰

However, Hegel points out that, within 'transcendentalism', the transcendental subject is not only a condition for objects known; it must somehow itself also be an object known. Kant, of course, tried to deny this everywhere, and argued instead that the transcendental unity of apperception is only a logical condition. But even that admission is enough for Hegel to claim that Kant's system is not fully self-conscious, or cannot account for its own 'logic'. (The most obvious telling point here is the table of the functions of judgment and its claims to completeness.)¹¹ In general terms, Hegel charges that Kant did not realize that knowledge of the conditions for knowledge could not be appropriately obtained within those conditions. But this whole line is a very long story – it leads ultimately to the necessity for a 'dialectical' logic and thus a dialectical interpretation of the highest principle of all judgments, the principle of non-contradiction.¹² We need only concern ourselves here with the result of Hegel's analysis – that Kant cannot coherently understand his own principle of subjectivity, and thus ends up 'limiting' knowledge to 'phenomena', and positing the unknowable thing in itself, inextricably bound up with Jacobi's paradox of causal affection.¹³ In the

Phenomenology, this criticism of the status of the Kantian subject is formulated in opposition to the methodological assumptions of Kant's transcendentalism. Knowledge as a 'means' for the subject, as *Verstand* (or modelled after *techne*), can never attain full self-consciousness and so must terminate in Fichte's subjective *Sollen* or Schelling's 'blank' objective ground, the infamous night in which all cows are black. In fact, Hegel argues in the *Encyclopaedia* that, since Kant cannot make or comprehend this distinction, his transcendental subject cannot finally be distinguished from an empirical subject. Or: given the instability in the Kantian distinction between object-level and meta-level, Kant is doing what Hume did – object-level knowledge of the human subject, or 'psychology'.¹⁴ In the terms used earlier, Kant's attempt to 'correct' the criteria of knowledge by a transcendental analysis must leave out a reflexive or systematic comprehension of its own enterprise and we have our earlier paradox. If Kant's analysis merely describes the necessary conditions for 'experience' having a meaning (with Strawson and Bennett),¹⁵ then Kant begs all the important questions by only 'describing' what he already, in some non-reflective way, *takes* to be a feature of experience (for example, causality). But if he claims to correct illusion and establish veridical conditions, he leaves unclear *how* we know for sure, a condition is a necessary condition for the possibility of experience without making use of some sense of knowledge that should not be warranted until after our transcendental analysis goes through. But then, how are we to avoid such reflective regresses?

In the Introduction Hegel characterizes this difficulty in the following way. Every 'natural' consciousness, or, let us say, object-level, or non-reflexive knowledge, is plagued by a difference between what Hegel calls 'knowledge' and 'truth'. That is, the possibility of error requires that every claim to know, no matter how subjectively 'certain', be able to demonstrate, or verify, its truth. This again, following Kant, does not mean just that each knowledge claim must have evidence, but that any universal 'standard' for knowledge, or what *counts* as evidence, must itself be demonstrable. As Hegel puts it,

This (consciousness) distinguishes itself from something to which it is at the same time related; or as this is expressed, there is something *for consciousness*, and the determinate side of this relating, or of the *being* of something *for a consciousness*, is *knowledge*. But, from this being for another we distinguish being in itself (*Ansichsein*); that which is related to knowledge is at the same time distinguished from it, and posited as *being* outside of this relation; this side of the in-itself is called *truth*.¹⁶

But, as Hegel presents it, this seems to pose an insurmountable problem,

since I show my knowledge to be true only in so far as I *know* the truth (where the 'truth' must again = 'my knowledge of the truth', where the *Ansichsein* must again be *für ein Bewusstsein*). As Hegel puts the problem to be overcome,

Should we now seek the truth of knowledge so, it appears, we are seeking what it (knowledge) is *in itself*. Only in this investigation, it is *our* object, it is *for us*; and its (knowledge's) *in-itself*, should it result from our inquiry, would only be its being *for us*; what we would assert as its essence would not be its truth, but rather our knowledge of it.¹⁷

So, Hegel asserts that we must accept both the Kantian claim that an 'object' is only an object for consciousness, and thus subject to its conditions, and the realist intentionality thesis that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. Knowledge thus is always 'for itself' knowledge of something, but also must be 'in itself' knowledge that it is knowledge, or knowledge of its truth. In its own Hegelian way, this claim thus represents the Kantian critical claim that any piece of empirical knowledge owes its possible truth to transcendental, subjective *conditions* for the possibility of experience. Thus, by way of Kant, it also returns us to the earlier transcendental problem and the issue of its relation to object-level knowledge. Put in its broadest Hegelian terms, the issue is the relation between consciousness of an object (knowledge) and self-consciousness (truth, or knowledge of knowledge, or finally, transcendental knowledge). As is infamous, Kant thought he could 'deduce' the move from the latter to the former, but as has already been shown, Hegel rejects such a methodological relation. His move is to argue instead for what he calls the 'experience'¹⁸ of consciousness as the middle term, occasionally speaking of the 'history' of this experience as the only way for consciousness itself to *become* self-conscious, or for a final and complete transcendental analysis of all knowledge to be itself known at an object-level. Any other attempt to know the truth of knowledge at the beginning would reduce the truth again to only our knowledge of the truth. Or, as Hegel puts it, the Absolute cannot be shot out of a pistol.¹⁹ Thus, instead of a critique of pure reason, he offers, with essentially the same goal, a science of the experience of consciousness, later called a phenomenology of spirit. So, now that we have stated the problem Hegel poses for himself, our obvious question becomes how this experience of consciousness or phenomenology of spirit successfully replaces a 'critique of reason' in eventually demonstrating the truth of consciousness in self-consciousness, or in revealing the relation between knowledge and knowledge of its truth.

Again in the Introduction Hegel offers his own account of the *Phenom-*

enology's methodology in attempting to resolve this dualism between knowledge and truth:

since consciousness tests and examines itself, all we are left to do is simply and solely to look on. For consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, on the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what to it is true, and consciousness of its knowledge of that truth.²⁰

Thus, by claiming that consciousness is always implicitly self-consciousness, Hegel offers an experiential standard for an object-level knowledge for-itself experiencing its own transcendental truth. The claim is that every object-level system cannot experience its objects except in terms of a self-conscious test not only of its truths, but, finally, its truth simply. Transcendental criteria are arrived at simply by the experience of object-level knowledge, not by an external methodology that cannot then explain its own standards.²¹ All 'we' have to do is 'look on'.

But this purely descriptive sense of the *Phenomenology's* task disguises some deep ambiguities. In the first place, it is hard to understand the epistemic stance from which we know even this much about the experiential relation between object-level and meta-level. How do 'we' know that consciousness must become self-consciousness? Further, Hegel's analysis of consciousness' experience of its own standards of truth is itself meta-level. That is, there is a sequence to overcoming this dualism between our knowledge of some truth and our knowledge *that* it is true. Also, within this sequence, we make use of what are already second-level hermeneutical terms: negation, *Aufhebung*, completion etc. In short, the stance of what Hegel calls the Absolute, from which 'we' understand the *Phenomenology*, again seems to raise all the problems Hegel himself raises against transcendental interpreters. Isn't Hegel offering just one further 'analysis' of philosophy and history (without a deduction)? This last is one of the most frequent criticisms made against Hegel: that he begs his own question by justifying his Absolute standpoint with an analysis of our necessarily coming to that standpoint, which analysis already depends *on that standpoint* for its justification.²²

But rather than directly discuss here the issue of the *Phenomenology's* 'we', I would like instead to return to the problem of self-conscious or meta-level discourse within the *Phenomenology*, as an issue for it. In fact, if some progress there can be made towards understanding the correct Hegelian treatment of 'criticism', only then can his *own* 'self-consciousness' be properly understood and, perhaps, properly criticized.²³

II

Within the *Phenomenology*, this issue is clearly of greatest thematic importance in the first four chapters, which explicitly detail the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. The crucial stage in that transition, and thus, as Gadamer and others²⁴ have pointed out, the crucial stage in correcting Kant, is the transition between the 'inverted world' and self-consciousness. At each stage of the *Phenomenology* before this shift, consciousness had attempted not only to know but to understand and defend what it was doing in so knowing. But, as Hegel will claim later, since consciousness did not understand *itself*, there always had to be a disproportion between knowing some object and knowing it *as true*. Thus: consciousness as sense-certainty (knowledge) knows only the *this*, the immediate sense-particular (its *truth*). But to know the *this*, consciousness must for-itself know the *this as a this*, either by writing it down or saying its truth, or even by 'pointing'. It must be self-conscious about its knowledge, otherwise its knowledge is *not* knowledge but opinion. But, at that point, what it *says* it knows is not what it knows, since the 'this' is an abstract universal, not a sensed immediate particular. This 'negation' of consciousness original position occurs because the connection between knowledge and truth is itself not explicit at this point. Or: the object known is still regarded as the independent standard for consciousness (on the object-level), but our knowledge of knowledge (at a reflexive-level) can only treat our *knowledge of the object* as its object. Hence there is a difference between the object for consciousness, the particular 'this', and the object 'as it is transcendentally known', the universal 'this' (or what the reflexive level *knows*). Hence consciousness must change its standard of knowledge, the object, so as to know what is 'really' known, the universal, and by so doing change its mode of knowing. The object must become a thing with universal sense qualities, and knowledge becomes perception.²⁵

We could claim at this point that this talk of dialectic and contradiction between consciousness and self-consciousness and the *Bewegung* or movement of consciousness to a sublation (*Aufhebung*) of its prior stance, is all quite true but enormously complicates a fundamentally simple fact: that there is a difference between standards of truth *for* the object-level and the transcendental level. But Hegel is not attempting to deny or ignore this difference; it is precisely what he is trying to understand. That is, Hegel wants to explain what happens in the opening chapters of the *Phenomenology* in the following way. Consciousness or knowledge of some object by means of a standard for knowledge necessarily implies 'knowing' *that standard*. It does in fact turn out that knowing the standard for knowledge involves a different sense of knowing from knowing by means of some standard. But this difference must not be extreme enough

to leave us no room to *explain* the *truth* of our reflected knowledge. But knowing *it* as true again involves some standard of knowledge. What happens in the first chapter thus illuminates this. We know some object, the sensible this. To know it as this, or as true, though, requires that we know the this as a universal. But this self-conscious awareness cannot simply remain a hermeneutic of what happens at the object level, since its claim for what is really known simply offers us another object known (now for a more self-conscious knower). Since we claim by a self-conscious awareness that what is really known is not a particular but a universal, we must then explain our knowledge of *that*. (In effect, this kind of a demand is at the core of Hegel's critique of any non-dialectical meta-level or self-conscious discourse.) Thus, sense-certainty of a this becomes perception of a thing with many qualities. But, Hegel claims, the experience of a thing with many qualities as what it is reveals that we are implicitly committed to some concept with which to explain the causal connections between many properties, the concept of force. But this meta-level mention of force is also a use that must itself be explained as itself known. And this can only be done by the mode of knowledge proper to the understanding (chapter III). In sum, because of the dualism between knowledge and truth, or subjective certainty and objective standards for the verification of certainty, Hegel claims that consciousness is unable to explain how what it knows can be known *as true*. If knowing the truth of knowledge is always different from knowing simply, then we can never claim to know the truth of knowledge, in which case we can't claim that the object is truly known.

This whole difficulty comes to a head in the inverted world section of the *Phenomenology*. There Hegel argues that, by means of the dialectic inherent in the stance of the understanding, this dualism between knowledge and truth that we have been talking about is *itself* experienced as the truth of knowledge. Consciousness itself realizes that the world we claim to know is, by virtue of *that claim*, an inverted world. This inversion occurs when we realize what must happen in any attempt to explain (*erklären*) anything. To explain something at this stage of the *Phenomenology*, we formulate laws, and laws express the relations we claim to know hold between elements of the law. But we can claim truth for these laws (or make a meta-level, self-conscious case *for* their truth) in either of two ways. We could claim that the relations held because of the requirements of explanation itself, or that the relation between elements in the law is analytic. 'Cause and effect' is then simply a feature of the way we use the term 'event'. But in this case, we don't explain anything other than our own terms for explanation. Or, the status of that relation could be a result of the *a posteriori* incorporation of the 'facts'. But in this case, the law again would not truly explain but just 'repeat'. (We get then either analytic *a priori* judgments or synthetic *a posteriori*.) But

then, to understand in any real sense would have to mean something like knowing the necessity of contingency, or the unity of diversity, or the permanence of change. But the former of each of these pairs is meant to explain the truth of the latter. It does so, then, only by 'inverting' the world it wants to understand. The most generic feature of that difficulty is that self-conscious truth must be the inversion of object-level knowledge. Or, for example, if the truth of all knowledge were empiricism, then we would invert that truth by *stating* it, since *it* cannot be known empirically.

The important point here about this awareness is that consciousness now itself knows what 'we' have been claiming is going on in the *Phenomenology's* dialectic, and it knows this in a way which has demonstrated why consciousness cannot avoid dealing with this inversion. The necessity for preserving both the truth of knowledge (as opposed to mere subjective certainty) and the fact that all truth is now shown to be truth only as known by a subject is now something consciousness itself realizes. The understanding comes to realize it must understand itself and the Kantian turn is made. There is no further necessity to demonstrate on yet another meta-level how we can claim this awareness, since consciousness' own attempt to establish some non-transcendental standpoint has been systematically reduced to absurdity.

Now, Hegel's claim, from the Introduction on, has been that without this *Entwicklung* or development of a self-conscious standpoint, any transcendental analysis would leave its own presuppositions and intentions blank. That supposedly has not happened here, since consciousness tests itself, continually experiencing the truth of its own knowledge. So we do not have to demonstrate (in what would have to be a regressive meta-meta-level proof) why the knowledge of any entity is subject- or theory-dependent. Hegel will now go on in elaborate detail to describe at a new object level this self-conscious subject, a subject that is eventually the *Geist* or *spirit* that is the *Phenomenology's* object.

But thus far such an explication still must ask about the terms with which Hegel can describe this process towards a full self-consciousness. In short the *Phenomenology* cannot make its case systematically without Hegel's *Science of Logic*,²⁶ although the truth of *Logic* is not explicit or for-itself to the *Phenomenology* until the end. But we then seem to be on the Hegelian merry-go-round again, since we claim a transcendental logic as the ground for the connections and movements of the *Phenomenology*. But we can now make use of the explanation just arrived at within the *Phenomenology* for the status of self-conscious discourse and claim that the whole course of the *Phenomenology* demonstrates the truth of this meta-science by demonstrating our necessary coming to it. The course or history of spirit's attempt to know itself can be *shown* to lead to a stance which correctly understands the 'logic' of that attempt. Conse-

quently, to accuse Hegel of interpreting the history of spirit from a standpoint which cannot justify itself without begging its question or arguing in circles cannot be made without accounting for the correct justification of 'self-consciousness' given *within* the *Phenomenology*. Hegel, by explicitly denying that he is offering a critique of reason's attempt to know, wants to offer instead an implicit or phenomenological standard for arriving at a fully reflexive knowledge. *The source of this defence for the unfolding of the Absolute is always a reduction of any non-reflexive stance* at any given point in the *Phenomenology*. The claim of each determinate negation or dialectical move in the *Phenomenology* is only that the position moved away from cannot claim its own truth without the *Bewegung* 'we' claim must occur. (That is, in fact, why each negation is 'determinate'. The reflected 'second level' preserves what was 'known' at a first level, even while it establishes what is *other* than that level.) In sum, the *Phenomenology* is experienced as necessary by spirit or as unavoidable to escape a *reductio*. Finally, we experience the truth of all that went before in its truth and not in the limited terms of the appearance of that truth. This final truth would be warranted by the internal necessity of spirit's progress towards it, even if that internal necessity were not fully explicit or for-consciousness at any one stage.

Such is Hegel's attempt to avoid Kantian circularity or Fichtean dualism in the stance of the *Phenomenology*'s 'we'. And such a qualification still leaves us with a central duality in the *Phenomenology*'s standpoint, one now describable in both its aspects.

In the first place, if this interpretation is correct, we cannot claim that the *Phenomenology*'s methodology is 'purely descriptive', as have Heidegger, Kojève, and most recently Kenley Royce Dove.²⁷ A description of an implicit dialectic between consciousness and self-consciousness is a description of what is only for-itself an experience but in-itself dialectical in the full Hegelian sense. Description within the *Phenomenology* is always description of parts within a whole, and it thus presupposes that whole in order to describe properly. So the *Phenomenology* describes only by means of a Hegelian logic, and thus, more correctly, interprets rather than describes.²⁸ But what it interprets are a series of experiences which are to make necessary and defensible that interpretation. The *Phenomenology* does have its own meta-level framework, but not one that needs to be itself 'known' by some other framework; it is arrived at and so justified by consciousness' necessary process of experiencing itself, its own standards of knowledge, and continually doing so, until it fully understands and overcomes that distinction between knowledge and truth.

However, there is still a difference in Hegel between knowing, or even describing, within some framework for knowledge that can be *shown* phenomenologically to be the correct framework, and knowing *that* it is such a transcendental structure, or *saying* it is. Consequently, there is a

difference between necessity for consciousness and necessity simply. That is, the appearance of the Absolute 'unfolds' in a way that eventually overcomes its phenomenality and allows 'us' to know the truth of its unfolding (*logic*). But *that* truth cannot know itself as the truth without that unfolding. Consequently, the *Logic* must, as well, presuppose the *Phenomenology*. If it did not, we would be back with all of our earlier paradoxes about knowing at the transcendental or logical level. I believe that this demonstration of the only Hegelian resolution to that problem would make the *Phenomenology* central to Hegel's *system* of 'wisdom'. Consequently, Otto Pöggeler's attempt,²⁹ through careful attention to Hegel's own vacillating statements about the *Phenomenology*, to argue for two irreconcilable parts to it, and to claim that what is of real value in it can be presented in Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* and finally in his *Logic*, would, I believe, leave us no transcendental warrant for the *Logic* itself. Likewise, Rosen's recent claim for the priority of logic explicitly raises this problem. He writes

(Hegel) wrote the *Phenomenology* in the quirk of inspiration peculiar to geniuses of the highest order, to demonstrate that human experience is the record of the progress of Spirit towards reconciliation of itself within Logos. Like other geniuses, however, in confusing himself with God, he seems to have forgotten that only his inward presence, as one who has already taken the upward journey, and has now descended to assist his fellow creatures, provided the necessary relation between time and eternity.³⁰

With the Wittgensteinean image Rosen later uses to make this point, our claim has been that this ladder to the Absolute cannot ever be discarded without, to use one of Hegel's favourite phrases, a 'falling to the ground' of the Absolute standpoint itself.³¹ Or, Rosen's emphasis on the logic, or even just the logic of the *Phenomenology*, may deal with the *Logic* as Absolute, but not with it known as Absolute, or with the *explanation of the Logic*. In that case the Absolute is Absolute only by being absolutely asserted. Rosen himself compellingly points out this kind of an *aporia* in his attempt to defend the ancient concept of intuition from Hegelian criticisms.³²

III

But with this mutual qualification of *both* the descriptive and the logical or scientific accounts of the *Phenomenology's* methodology, what are we left with? In sum, I have suggested that there are really two 'transition' problems in *each* of the work's various transitions. One involves simply

the specific issues of each different argument in the various particular sections. We simply have to examine each of these 'transcendental' arguments in their own terms. The other problem concerns the transcendental or critical status of Hegel's own account, or, in his terms, the 'truth' of his 'knowledge'. Such an issue concerns the self-conscious understanding of the truth or correctness of all the transitions, or the structure or framework for all of them (the 'becoming of self-consciousness'). That involves demonstrating the 'truth' of the interpretative framework which includes negation, dialectic and, in general, the structure of 'experience' as a duality between consciousness and self-consciousness. I have argued that Hegel can demonstrate this truth by virtue of his argument that consciousness must become self-conscious or face absurdity *on its own terms* (or *for-itself*).

However, to claim any more than that, to claim anything beyond a comprehensive reflection on the dialectic of consciousness and self-consciousness as herein described, would mean that Hegel would have to stand outside his own system, or the limits set for his own discourse, a position which would, of course, require yet another discourse. He has, indeed, been much more successful than Kant in being 'self-conscious' *about* transcendental inquiry itself, without any regress or axiomatically constituted beginning, and he has done so by attention to the 'internal' necessity for reflection within consciousness 'experience' of its own 'truth'. This attention has been both descriptive and transcendental in the manner described above.³³

Thus, to 'know' this about the phenomenon of knowledge itself is to experience *its* truth and so to perform what Hegel concisely calls the 'negation' of self-consciousness' own negation. If we call this complex series of reflections 'dialectic', then Hegel has 'absolutely' demonstrated dialectic as a necessary condition for the possibility of philosophic discourse, and has done so in such a way that this 'in-itself' necessity is 'finally' for-itself.³⁴

So, as indicated at the end of section II, if this analysis is correct, then we must be cautious in characterizing the 'finality' of Hegel's 'Absolute' knowledge. As a 'transcendental' inquiry, it is 'complete' in its presentation and defence of the only terms within which reflection can occur. The duality of consciousness and self-consciousness, the resolution of that duality at some level in reason and a new reflection on that level enclose any philosophic inquiry by being the formal conditions for the possibility of such reflection. When such 'conditions' are finally themselves 'brought to self-consciousness', it is thus only axiomatic, unreflective, purely formal or intuitionist philosophy that ends, not philosophy itself. Put one final, perhaps too succinct way, if Hegel's enterprise is not viewed in the way described, then his own last chapter in the *Phenomenology* could not be a part of the work as a whole but a reflection on that whole, thus,

as the old paradox runs, requiring yet another sublation, *ad malum infinitum*.³⁵

So, if we are correct in describing the *Phenomenology* as phenomenological and transcendental, then we can claim that, just as Kant did not 'complete' or end science and mathematics (*Verstand*) by completely detailing and demonstrating the conditions for the possibility of knowledge, so Hegel has not completed speculative or metaphysical inquiry (*Vernunft*) by detailing and demonstrating the conditions for the possibility of, and the necessity for, such comprehensive reflection. In fact, we can claim that his analysis precludes *that* notion of 'completion'.

That is, to state this last result more specifically, we can claim the following. As we have tried to show, Hegel is not committed to claiming that 'to know X' we must self-consciously or explicitly know 'that we know X'. (Or: that we must justify our 'framework' for truth *whenever* we make a claim for knowledge.) In fact, he admits that it is the 'natural' form of consciousness (object-level knowledge) *not* to know 'that we know X', but just to know X. What he does claim is that to be able to *say*, assert, claim or just *state* our knowledge of X (philosophically), especially in the face of possible error, we then must *know* 'that we know X' (and thus must naively accept neither our knowledge of X nor the standards by which we claim *that* we know X). For the *Phenomenology's* whole argument to be successful, then, Hegel must show two things: (I) being able (*an sich*) to assert or claim in language *that we do know X* (*für sich*) is a necessary condition for knowing X. (This is, of course, the counterpart of Kant's claim that the 'I think' must *be able* to accompany all my representations.) And (II), that the relation between knowing and knowing knowledge (self-consciousness) is one of 'negation', a reflection that must *move away from* the object known (and so 'negate' it) to the standard for knowledge or experience itself.

While (I) and (II) are both required for the *Phenomenology's* analysis to proceed, and are demonstrated throughout the course of that work, if taken together and viewed with respect to any final, or 'philosophy-ending' claim, they would generate a paradox. Such a paradox would occur as soon as we tried both to state such a claim (I) *and* state the grounds for such an assertion (II). To state those 'reasons' would be to appeal to yet another 'truth', other than what was supposed to be an 'Absolute' standard, just in order to justify the claim that this truth *was* Absolute. Such a paradox is avoided if we view the task of the *Phenomenology* as itself reflective or transcendental, concerned not with making philosophic claims but with *the* making of philosophic claims (or the appearance of such claims as themselves 'phenomena'). The 'ground' for Hegel's own claim for his self-conscious system is, again, the experience of reflection itself, not some external, for ever 'beyond' criterion of Absolute Truth.

Thus, the 'negative' difference made necessary by Hegel's own proof for (II) can never be overcome in being brought to self-consciousness; Hegelian inquiry obviously remains other than, or different from, non-Hegelian inquiry. And, in turn, this difference always requires that we attempt to assess (to describe *and* criticize) the Hegelian enterprise, though not by some formal, meta-level regress, but now *within* a framework demonstrated to be, and defended as, necessarily required for any philosophic reflection. The Hegelian system is thus complete only in the sense of having transcendently warranted a claim for the indispensability of such attempts at comprehensive reflection. (It is in this sense that the 'last' shape of consciousness is, and we may now add, is *only* a 'Wissenschaft des Wissens'.) This absolute knowledge has thus 'actually' been attained (it is no 'regulative ideal'), but without being a knowledge of any Absolute subject to the paradoxes noted above. We can thus at once recognize Hegel's unique case *for* dialectic, while we remind ourselves that any attempt at a complete 'closure'³⁶ for the system must terminate in rendering Hegel's Absolute a surd.

Finally, such an incompleteness, the implications of which are far beyond the scope of this study, does not curse philosophy with some Sisyphean task; it rather powerfully restates, and, for the first time, systematically defends, with no questions begged, the perennial task of philosophy itself: *Γνωθι σαυτόν*.

Notes

* Different versions of this paper were presented, in early 1975, at Vassar College and the University of California, San Diego.

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1971), hereafter referred to as *PhG*. In all notes page numbers of the German text are given first, followed in parentheses by page numbers of J. B. Baillie's translation, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (New York, Harper & Row, 1967): p. 556 (797).

2 G. W. F. Hegel, *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), *Werke*, 2, pp. 25–30, pp. 41–3, especially p. 42: 'Das transzendente Wissen verneint beides Reflexion und Anschauung; es ist Begriff und Sein zugleich.' What we want to claim here is that the *PhG* is this transcendental knowledge. See also, p. 55.

3 *ibid.*, p. 25.

4 See H. G. Gadamer, *Hegels Dialektik* (Tübingen, Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), pp. 31–47; Dieter Henrich, 'Hegels Theorie über den Zufall', *Kant-Studien*, v. 50 (1938) p. 134; Robert C. Solomon, 'Hegel's Epistemology', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. II, no. 4 (October 1974), p. 278, *inter alia*.

5 For Kant's comments on the nature of, and the necessity for, transcendental philosophy, see the *Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York, St Martin's Press, 1965), B XVI, A12/B25.

6 *PhG*, pp. 66–7 (135–6).

7 For passages where Hegel characterizes his system as essentially a fully 'self-conscious' one, see the *PhG*'s summary of its own progress towards self-consciousness, pp. 549–56 (798–97), especially the definition of absolute knowledge: 'The nature, moments and movement of the Knowledge have then resulted in the fact that it is pure being-for-itself of self-consciousness.' Also see pp. 27 (90), 74–5 (144–5) and 562 (805).

8 Oddly enough, Kant himself seems well aware of this as a problem. In the *Critique*, he writes, 'Now it is indeed very evident that I cannot know as an object, that which I must presuppose to know any object.' (A402). Hegel's claim is that Kant never resolved this ambiguity and should have seen it as the beginning of a 'dialectical' reflection.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Differenzschrift*, op cit.; see especially the remarks on Kant in the *Vorerinnerung*, pp. 9–14.

10 *ibid.*, p. 48.

11 *PhG*, p. 179 (277). See also Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1971), Bd 1, pp. 32–3; Hegel's *Science of Logic*, transl. by A. V. Miller (New York, Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 51ff.

12 I do not here explicitly deal with the 'consciousness/self-consciousness' problem and 'dialectic', although it does seem to me quite relevant. For a superior study of Hegel's notion of dialectic, especially in terms of its relation to Kant's intensional logic, see Thomas Seebohm, 'Das Widerspruchsprinzip in der Kantischen Logik und der Hegelschen Dialektik', *Akten des 4. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Teil 11, 2 (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1974), pp. 862–74.

13 F. H. Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus* (Breslau, 1787), pp. 222ff.

14 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969), pp. 67–85, especially pp. 69, 70–2.

15 I refer here to the 'analytic' Kant interpretations of P. F. Strawson. *The Bounds of Sense* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1968) and Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Analytic* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1966).

16 *PhG*, p. 70 (139).

17 *ibid.*, p. 71 (140).

18 The most detailed investigation of 'experience' as the crucial term for the *PhG* is Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York, Harper & Row, 1970).

19 *PhG*, p. 26 (89).

20 *ibid.*, p. 72 (141).

21 In effect, then, the claim is that there are not 'two levels' but one 'subject' (*Geist*) experiencing both sides (*an sich* and *für sich*) of itself. Such a claim should be compared, and of course contrasted, with a contemporary 'one-sorted' thinker. See R. Schuldenfrei, 'Quine in Perspective', *Journal of Philosophy*, LXIX (13 January 1972), especially his last, enigmatic remark on Hegel, p. 16.

22 See Raymond Plant, *Hegel* (Bloomington and London, 1973), p. 105n.

23 Obviously, with such a restriction to certain sections of the *PhG*, we cannot hope to offer a comprehensive account of the work as a whole. But if Hegel is correct, then from the standpoint of the work's own 'self-consciousness', any 'dialectical' transition in the work should illuminate the structure of the whole.

24 H. G. Gadamer, *Hegels Dialektik* (Tübingen, Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), pp. 31–47 [translation reprinted below, pp. 131–47. R.S.]; Wilhelm Purpus, *Zur Dialektik des Bewusstseins* (Berlin, Trowitsch und Söhne, 1908), pp. 115–75; Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit* (Paris, Editions Montaigne, 1946), pp. 126–36; J. Flay, 'Hegel's Inverted World', *Review of Meta-*

physics, 23, no. 4 (June 1970), pp. 662–78 [reprinted below, pp. 148–61. R.S.]; and Stanley Rosen, *G. W. F. Hegel. An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 140–50.

25 I believe these arguments can be termed 'transcendental', as Charles Taylor does in 'The Opening Arguments of the *Phenomenology*', in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by A. MacIntyre (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1972), pp. 151–87, but only if we pay close attention to the connection between and thus the structure of such arguments. Taylor with Strawsonian and Wittgensteinian strategies is able to achieve great success in defending each of the arguments but does not illuminate the ground or source for them except *in concreto*. He thus leaves Hegel's own position as unselfconscious as Kant's.

26 G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, p. 29 (48), and especially p. 30 (49), where Hegel calls the *PhG* a 'deduction' of the *Logik*. I am aware, of course, of other, more problematic statements of this relationship and about the place of the *PhG* within the whole system. For accounts of these alternative formulations, see Rosen, op. cit., pp. 123–30; Otto Pöggeler, 'Qu'est-ce que la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit?', *Archives de Philosophie* (April–June, 1966), pp. 189–236, and Emil Fackenheim's neat summary in *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 73.

27 Heidegger, op. cit., A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York, Basic Books, 1969), pp. 169–259. 'The Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method in Hegel', especially pp. 171, 186, and 259. Also see K. R. Dove, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', *Review of Metaphysics*, 23, no. 4 (June 1974) [reprinted above, pp. 17–38. R.S.]. My further differences with Dove are worked out in greater detail below.

28 For an interpretation which seems to me to go too far in a direction counter to those interpreters mentioned in the above note see Fackenheim, op. cit., 'What moves necessarily is not the reality observed but rather the phenomenological thinker', p. 69. Both these positions oddly exempt *phenomenological knowledge*, from the requirements established in the *PhG* for all knowledge. They thus end up making either an 'objective' or a 'subjective' mistake. We have tried to avoid that here simply by raising the issue of the *PhG* for it.

29 Pöggeler, op. cit., pp. 221ff., and p. 233. The point made here does not deny directly Pöggeler's well-supported claims about the proper relation between the *PhG* and the *Philosophy of Spirit* and *Logik*. I am more interested here in the *systematic* nature of Hegel's work, given the epistemological distinctions that begin the *PhG*. There is thus no disagreement with Pöggeler's claim that 'dans la Phénoménologie il (Hegel) veut précisément montrer que le savoir absolu coïncide parfaitement avec son objet et est donc "exact"'. But, as has been shown, there are serious ambiguities involved in the *montrer* at issue.

30 Rosen, op. cit., p. 130. For Hegel's own remarks on this issue, see his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. E. B. Speirs and J. B. Sanderson (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1895), p. 165: 'I raise myself in thought to the Absolute . . . thus being infinite consciousness; yet at the same time I am finite consciousness . . . Both aspects seek each other and flee each other . . . I am the struggle between them.'

31 Hegel's use of the 'ladder' metaphor to explain the *PhG* is confusing. See *PhG* p. 25 (87). Science provides us with a ladder with which to reach a standpoint, from which we see that the 'ground' for reaching the standpoint lies 'in us'. See also Fackenheim, op. cit., all of chapter III, pp. 31–74.

32 Rosen, op. cit., pp. 266ff. See also James A. Ogilvy, 'Reflections on the Absolute', *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 28 no. 3 (1975), pp. 520–46. I agree

completely with Ogilvy's final statement of incompleteness on p. 545, but rather than 'demonstrate' it by considering the way in which that 'perpetual repetition of the role of subjectivity' is expressed in the *Hegel-Literatur*, I want to show that it is demonstrated by the *PhG* itself, and that there is a legitimate transcendental meaning to Hegel's own claims for completeness or absolute knowledge.

33 We must leave aside, for the moment, the intricate question of whether Hegel himself did or did not want a stronger claim to completeness than the one here sketched. Our point thus far has been that he does not, given his own beginning, need a stronger claim than the completion here described. For an alternative view, critical of Hegel, see H. G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 2. Aufl. (Tübingen, 1965), pp. 337–8.

34 I think that by virtue of the claims made here, Hegel *can* say a great deal more about what Solomon calls his 'MS standpoint' than Solomon gives him credit for. See 'Hegel's Epistemology', op. cit., pp. 288–9.

35 We should recognize a traditional alternative solution at this point. One could argue that self-consciousness, precisely for the reasons here adduced, can be itself definable only *socially*. (Hence, the otherwise puzzling move from these 'epistemological' problems to the Master–Slave dialectic.) But we can quickly point out that there is still a 'difference' in this move between 'being recognized' and knowing *that* and in what sense one is 'recognized'. The 'experience' of the slave's lack of recognition again demands reflection, indeed, the 'negating' reflection of slave ideologies (Stoicism, scepticism and the unhappy consciousness).

36 For a fuller treatment of the problem of the *Abgeschlossenheit* of Hegel's system, see L. Bruno Puntel, *Darstellung, Methode und Struktur* (Bonn, Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1973), *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 10, pp. 335–46.

Dialectic and the role of the phenomenologist

Werner Marx

As a 'preparation' for science proper, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has a double task: it should bring forth the 'concept of science'; and secondly, it should persuade natural consciousness – the unfree, untrue, merely understanding [*Verständige*] philosophy of reflection – that it can arrive at free, true, absolute reflection, science, since its element is already effective in it. Both tasks are connected in a 'justification' of the scientific standpoint. Our question is: what role does the phenomenologist, the philosopher – in Hegel's terminology, 'we' – play in connection with its realization? Hegel said very little about this important theme for an understanding of the method of the work.

Let us first recall briefly that which is known. Disregarding the last sections of the Introduction, the *Phenomenology* is concerned to show that there is no need for us (the 'we', i.e. the philosopher) 'to apply our own bright ideas and thoughts during this investigation' (§ 12);¹ and why 'what remains for us is simply the pure act of observation' (§ 13). Does this mean, however, that 'we', the phenomenologist, play no role at all?

Hegel scholarship has not paid attention to the difference that exists between the historically manifold, appearing shapes of 'natural consciousness' and the qualified knowledge of natural consciousness, 'phenomenal knowledge' [*erscheinendes Wissen*].² Natural consciousness does not subject itself of itself to the law of movement which secures the necessity of the progress towards absolute knowledge and the complete coherence of its shapes. Phenomenal knowledge alone goes the way of a goal-orientated development in which it traverses 'the sequence of shapes' and in that way is 'the detailed history of consciousness' own education [*Bildung*] to the level of science' (I § 6); this is so for the reason that the phenomenologist takes it along as his 'object' (I § 5) on the way of presentation [*Darstellung*], and does so continuously, moreover, until it attains the already 'fixed goal' (I § 8). Even provided that for the phenomenologist

'only the pure act of observation remains', he plays, to that extent, a role as he methodically makes a way of knowing of natural consciousness his theme. Certainly one must immediately limit his role by adding an initial determination of it – the phenomenologist does not have a decisive function here. For in the first part of the Introduction it is shown that, and how, consciousness moves forward of itself because of the dynamic of its essence as concept [*Begriffsnatur*]. In examining the 'reality of cognition' (I § 9), i.e. examining its claim to have grasped the subject matter in its truth, it realizes itself without any outside help as a 'comparison of consciousness with itself' (I § 12). Consciousness moves in the manner of a self-examination and self-correction and measures its momentary representing as well as its content against the standard of measurement which is 'given in reference to itself', since consciousness provides its own measurement 'from within itself' (ibid.). For our theme it is important to emphasize that Hegel determined this movement executed on consciousness itself out of which at any given time [*jeweils*] 'the new true object . . . springs forward', as 'experience' (I § 13). All these textual passages have been adequately discussed in the literature on Hegel.³

The same applies to the passage towards the end of the Introduction in which for the first – and as one generally believes, the only time – the role of the phenomenologist is determined by Hegel himself.⁴ We need but mention with regard to this section an aspect of the role of the phenomenologist: that there 'our contribution' [*unsere Zutat*], which lies in 'the contemplation of a circumstance' and which is only 'for us' and not 'for the consciousness . . . which we observe' (I § 15), is expressly mentioned. The new object shows itself to the phenomenologist – what escapes the consciousness which he observes – 'as becoming through a turnabout [*Umkehrung*] of consciousness itself' (ibid.). The result of the comparing experience of a non-correspondence of knowledge and in-itself (truth) does not represent for the phenomenologist – as it does for the consciousness observed – an 'empty nothing' (I §§ 7, 15) which is to be discarded into an empty abyss, but rather a nothing 'of that which it is the result' (ibid.). He knows that the experience of the nothingness of the old object – of the first in-itself – contains as its proper result the 'new object'. More precisely, he knows that the experience of non-correspondence – i.e. the experience that contradictions are coming to the fore between the hitherto dominant sphere of objectivity or truth and the knowledge of it on the part of phenomenal knowledge – is antithetical movement. It is through this antithetical movement that for phenomenal knowledge this sphere loses its character of an in-itself lying beyond consciousness but rather becomes a being-for consciousness of the in-itself (I § 15), and the 'true' (ibid.) presents itself as an accidentally discovered (cf. § 15) second new object. But the phenomenologist knows

that the new object is nothing other than the synthesis which results from that antithetical movement of experience. He understands [*durchschaut*], consequently, wherein the 'dialectical' character of the movement of phenomenal knowledge lies and sees at the same time that it constitutes not only the 'becoming', the 'coming-into-being' [*Entstehen*], of a single determined shape, but that the result-character and transition-character of this movement 'guide the entire succession of shapes of consciousness in its necessity' (§ 15). The necessity which lies in this dialectic is also that which, in general, makes possible the 'scientific presentation' of the dialectical steps in its complete coherence, the 'justification' of the scientific standpoint in front of the merely understanding philosophy of reflection (I § 16).

But does the 'contribution' [*Zutat*] of the phenomenologist referred to within the Introduction exhaust itself in this understanding [*Durchschauen*] of the dialectical character and in the undertaking of the presentation as merely a 'presentation' and as such a passive reproducing event, through which – as we read in one other place in the Introduction – the determinations of phenomenal knowledge as the object of presentation 'are only picked up as they immediately present themselves'? Does the active thinking of the phenomenologist, then, play no role at all?

We have till now not taken into consideration that § 15 of the Introduction demands that the actual result of the movement of examination of phenomenal consciousness must be 'comprehended' [*aufgefaßt*] as being such. In § 7 of the Introduction it has already been made clear that the 'presentation of the untrue consciousness' has to realize just this 'comprehension' [*Auffassen*]. Towards the end of this paragraph Hegel evidently addresses himself to the phenomenologist when he writes: 'But when, on the contrary, the result is comprehended as it is in truth, as *determinate* negation, a new form has thereby immediately arisen, and in the negation the transition is made through which the progress through the complete series of shapes comes about of itself.' Here the responsibility of the phenomenologist is clearly outlined. His thematization of knowledge is an accomplishment of his thinking in a double way: at first it lies in the presentation itself. For only the presentation makes clear that and how the contradictory experiences of phenomenal knowledge come to such a critical point, that they negate each other and result in a 'new form', and that the negation makes the transition – and with this the 'complete system of the forms and the necessity of the progression and the interrelatedness of the shapes'.

There is, however, still one further achievement of the active thinking of the phenomenologist: one needs only to have before oneself the expositions through which he at the beginning of the work, but also later on – in paragraphs about the 'Spirit' – introduces through personal reflections upon the history of experience, its interruptions, momentary conclusions,

and transitions, in order to realize that what are at stake in this 'comprehension' and assurance of the 'transition' are additional accomplishments which are by no means exhausted by acts which are simply 'comprehending'. How though, can we determine these acts of thought more precisely? The hitherto cited paragraphs in the text of the Introduction do not provide an answer to this question.

I now want to call your attention to a text at the end of the *Phenomenology* which refers again to a 'contribution' of the phenomenologist which perhaps sheds more light on the mode and way of his thinking activity. In the chapter 'Absolute knowledge', where the concept comes forward in its full meaning, he says:

Our own contribution here [*Was wir hier hinzugetan*] has been simply to assemble [*die Versammlung*] the separate moments, each of which in principle exhibits the life of Spirit in its entirety, and also to secure the concepts in the form of the concept, the content of which would already have yielded itself in those moments and in the *form of a shape of consciousness*.

(§ 797, Miller translation)

The determinations of the 'contribution' as 'assembling' and as 'securing' [*Festhalten*] have a more active and specific meaning than that of the *contribution* in the Introduction. Above all, it is noticeable that here the theme is the relation of the phenomenologist to the categories as they occur in the *Phenomenology*. To be sure, in the same chapter a few pages later, Hegel has greatly endeavoured to emphasize the different function of the categories in the *Phenomenology* as over against that in the *Logic*. He emphasizes that in the pure ether of science the progression of the pure concept depends solely on its *determinateness*. Even though each abstract moment of science might correspond to a shape in the *Phenomenology*, it certainly is true that, as the Introduction had already stipulated (I § 17), they 'are for consciousness' only, that they appear not as pure moments but in the form of 'shapes of consciousness'.

There is absolutely no doubt about it that this fundamental difference between the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology* exists. But for all that – and this the Hegel scholarship of the last few years has increasingly shown – the movement-structure of the *Phenomenology* must not be seen exclusively from the perspective of the history of experience of the self-examining consciousness. Although it still remains disputed to what degree the categorical development is of significance, passages in the Preface which are univocally directed at the *Phenomenology* appear to us to give firm evidence that those 'simple determinations' of the concepts or 'pure essences' [*reinen Wesenheiten*] play a role which Hegel called 'self-movements' or 'circles', and to which besides those determinations enumerated

in § 56, such as being-in-itself, being-for-itself, self-identity, there also belong others – such as immediacy, mediation, simplicity, difference, uniqueness, particularly, universality, relatedness-to-self, and relatedness-to-other.⁵ Of them it is said in § 34 with direct reference to the *Phenomenology*: 'This movement of pure essences constitutes the nature of scientific method in general. Regarded as the connectedness of their content it is the necessity and expansion of that content into an organic whole. By virtue of the scientific method the path through which the concept of knowledge is reached becomes likewise a necessary and complete process of becoming'; it encompasses 'through the movement of the concept the entire sphere of the worldly consciousness in its necessary development'.

In view of the meaning that Hegel attributes to the categorical aspect of the *Phenomenology*, it appears necessary to reformulate our question about the role of the phenomenologist, the 'we', in the following new way: what sort of thinking realizes the relation of the phenomenologist to the 'movements' as their 'assembling' and as a 'securing of the concept in the form of the concept'? It would certainly be false to equate phenomenological thinking with 'comprehending thinking' and thus the presentation of the *Phenomenology* with 'speculative presentation'.⁶ And just as little would it do to identify phenomenological thinking with 'mere reasoning knowledge', which the Preface distinguishes from comprehending thinking. The phenomenological thinking is certainly no 'reflection into the empty I' (§ 54). Does Hegel perhaps conceive the thinking of the phenomenologist as 'similar' to comprehending thinking? Following the Preface (§ 54), this is realized in that it immerses itself into the 'immanent self of the content'. It does this in losing itself in the subject matter, in becoming 'engrossed' [*vertieft*] in it, and thus becomes the 'self-moving soul of the realized content' (§ 53). By means of this, the meaning present in a given determination begins to move in the *Logic* and determines itself from thesis to antithesis and from it to synthesis.

Certainly, one cannot make the assertion that the phenomenologist by the fact that he immerses himself in the content of the 'moments' – the 'essences' as they appear in the *Phenomenology* – brings about the movement. That would just contradict the sense of the specific method of the *Phenomenology* which we set out according to which phenomenal knowledge, on the basis of its natural concept, accomplishes by itself the dialectical movement. And it would also contradict the sense of the 'contribution' defined in the Introduction in so far as the phenomenologist, just when he 'grasps' [*auffassen*] the result of the negation as such and secures the transition of forms, himself enters the movement of phenomenal knowledge at the level of which his reflection takes place. But it still seems to be that he does not depend upon this movement at the level of experience only. As the many and different expositions of the phenomenologist in the text attest, he guides and directs [*steuert*] the

movement through categorical reflections; these are indeed there where phenomenal knowledge, in general, has 'not yet grasped the *concept* as *concept*' more intensively and more frequently than in later stages of the presentation.⁷ In any case, they are that which 'assemble' the individual moments towards its goal. From the standpoint of the phenomenologist, they constitute his 'securing of the concept', and to that extent they keep the transition from one negation to the other in the direction of absolute knowledge. The important point, however – and quite certainly this characterizes the contribution of the phenomenologist in a new way – is that through it the concept *in the form of the concept* is secured, for this means that the thinking of the phenomenologist in this regard takes its contents not from the history of experience of phenomenal knowledge, although he must engage in it, but from the 'form of the concept'. To this form belong the previously mentioned 'pure essences', simple determinations, the pure self-movements which bring about the movement *of* the concept through which – following the quoted text in the Preface – the way of presentation will 'encompass the entire sphere of worldly consciousness in its necessary development'.

As the 'dialectical movement' of phenomenal knowledge remains the motor of movement in the *Phenomenology*, so for that reason the phenomenologist, with the help of these categorical determinations, must secure the concept in the form of the concept. After one is persuaded that the philosopher keeps himself not only on the level of phenomenal knowledge, but at the same time on the categorical level, then – even if it remains open how these categories stand to the conception of Hegel's *Logic* – the question arises with urgency how it is justified with regard to the theoretical system that he already possesses from a speculative standpoint. This is a question which one can also raise in another way: in what sense is the *Phenomenology* like an appearing [*aufretende*] science – in Hegel's words – 'an appearance [*Erscheinung*] itself'? Here, we cannot deal with this problem any closer.

We can now summarize the aspects of the role of the phenomenologist we have developed: he is, *first of all*, the one who makes knowledge as 'phenomenal' his theme, and through this thematization causes its dialectical movement. Second, he is the one who not only works through the dialectical character of this movement, but also comprehends its given result as a synthesis of the preceding antithetical development which necessarily enables the progress to the following shapes. Moreover, he is the one who, on the basis of the insight into this necessity of the sequence of shapes, undertakes the presentation as a justification of the scientific standpoint. Third, he is the one who, through his reflections at the categorical level, directs and guides the complete movement as that of the concept.

Only when one sees these three aspects of the role of the phenomenolo-

gist together does one know why and how he is able to comply with the task of the *Phenomenology* as defined in the beginning.

Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, all paragraph citations are to J. Hoffmeister's edition of the *Phänomenologie*, Hamburg, 1952.

2 See the author's *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Commentary on the Preface and Introduction*, New York, 1975.

3 *ibid.*, 98ff.

4 *ibid.*

5 This also includes such essences as something, other, determination, quality, as well as such determinations as finitude, infinity, objectivity etc., and other expressions which have no other meaning than that of a mediating movement: reflection, being-reflected etc. About all of these 'essences' it is said at the end of the chapter 'Perception' that they and 'sound common sense' are 'only the play of these abstractions', whereas philosophy deals with the 'things of thought', and recognizes them 'as pure essences, as the absolute elements and powers' and is therefore 'master over them'.

6 On the problem of speculative presentation, see the author's *Absolute Reflexion und Sprache*, Frankfurt, 1967. Reprinted in *Vernunft und Welt*, Den Haag, 1970.

7 The difference between the unfolding history of experience of phenomenal knowledge and the function of the 'we' is accurately determined within this reflecting exposition at the beginning of the chapter 'Force and understanding'. There it becomes clear that here consciousness has yet 'no part in its free realization', and it is said 'We must step into its place and be the concept which develops what is contained in the result. It is through awareness of this completely developed object, which presents itself to consciousness as something that immediately is [*ein Seiendes*], that consciousness first becomes explicitly a consciousness that comprehends.'

That and how the reflection of the phenomenologist continues to become less and less are to be seen by comparing the exposition at the beginning of the section headed 'Consciousness' with that beginning and ending the section of 'Reason'. The section of 'Spirit' can also be compared. (See § 440, Miller translation.)

Hegel's image of phenomenology

H. S. Harris

At the beginning of his commentary on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Howard Kainz poses an interesting question: 'What', he asks, 'is the literary form of the "Phenomenology"?' But, although his consideration of the question produces some interesting comparisons, and quite a few incidental insights, he is not able to give a direct answer that is informative. 'We conclude tentatively . . . that this work is completely unique in the annals of philosophy.'

This will not do, and Kainz knows it. The object of asking the question is to get some guideline for reading the work; to discover whether there are any other works we are already familiar with that it resembles in a structural way and that can help us see the relation between the parts; and to orientate ourselves as we go through it. Even if there is no other philosophical work like it, there must surely be other kinds of books that it resembles in an instructive, orientating fashion. Thus, the book Spinoza called *Ethics* is quite unlike any other ethical treatise,² but Kainz rightly points out that its obvious similarity to a textbook on geometry has an orientating significance for the beginning reader that is quite helpful. (He does not add that ultimately it may be dangerously misleading if we cling too tightly to it, but that seems to me to be another important truth that we should do well to remember in the present context.)

In lieu of anything better, Kainz offers five hints that supposedly have a positive value in orientating ourselves for the task of reading the *Phenomenology*. First, he suggests it has an 'inward form' that will give us clues to its purpose (or purposes). So far as there is any positive guidance in this, it amounts to the suggestion that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is like a great prose-poem. This may be true, but it certainly is not a novel suggestion.³ Moreover, it is of little use as a primary orientation. To begin with, Hegel himself was conscious of the imperfection of the literary form of what he had produced; he spoke of this in a letter

to Schelling at the time of publication.⁴ Thus, attention to the 'inner form' runs the risk of leading to wrong conclusions, because the balance and relationship of the parts as literary elements are not what the author himself thought they ought to be.

Second, this way of looking at the work is only posing the problem again in a context we are more familiar with. Occasionally the author of a long poem or a novel will tell us in a straightforward manner at the beginning what he intends to do (just as Milton does in *Paradise Lost*). But more often than not his deeper purpose or meaning is hidden, and we have to struggle to find it. There is undeniably an element of concealment in Hegel's method. For there are references we can catch, but which he could have made clearer; then there are others we can only speculate about, because the text is deliberately enigmatic. I am not sure whether more poets have written in this riddling and allusive way since 1807 than before, but I am certain that comparing Hegel with them does not help. For instance, I believe that Blake's great prophetic work, *The Four Zoas*, is an allegorical 'phenomenology' of human historical consciousness that is far closer to what Hegel attempted, both in conception and execution, than any of the German Romantic parallels that Kainz suggests in his fifth hint. But there is no way that this belief will help me to understand Hegel.

(It is altogether more likely that an understanding of Hegel will help me read Blake. It might also deepen my appreciation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and the *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* of Novalis, if the basic hypothesis – that those works are intended to incarnate not just a typical pattern of individual experience but also the historic experience of the human community – is justified. Whether that assumption is correct I need not inquire further in this paper, because any potential beam of enlightenment goes from the philosophical work to the poetic, not *vice versa*.)

This brings us to the deepest reason for being wary of the poetic analogy. Poetry can have the purpose of conceptual explanation and scientific enlightenment (as in Lucretius), but not usually. Philosophy, on the other hand, typically (though not necessarily) has this explicit aim, and no one was ever more categorical in his commitment to it than Hegel. We must concede this, no matter what our estimate of his actual achievement may be. If Hegel is indeed a 'poet among philosophers', he does not rank with Lucretius and Dante, nor even with Plato and Kierkegaard. Thus, although it may be legitimate to conclude with Croce that Hegel was a poet of sorts, in spite of himself, we ought first to give him the fairest hearing we can manage upon his own terms. We must not tell beginning readers to approach the *Phenomenology* as if it were poetry because (as Kainz acknowledges in his second suggestion) Hegel was 'their

to the rationalist persuasion in philosophy' and his objective was to describe 'the world precisely as an organized System of Reason'.

We ought not to take this scientific aim as our guide either, however, since 'the description of the world' (if that is a correct characterization of Hegel's philosophical aim, which I take leave to doubt) is accomplished in the system itself, for which the *Phenomenology* is only the 'introduction'. The function of the introduction, as an independent whole – and especially as the 'first part of the System of Science' – must be something distinguishable from that overall aim, something more particularly specifiable.

This leaves us with the two hints which Kainz derives (through Hyppolite) from the works of Fichte and Schelling. Hyppolite sees in Fichte's 'deduction of presentation'⁵ 'a first model of what Hegel's *Phenomenology* will be'.⁶ But I do not think Kainz can possibly have checked the reference, for I can well remember puzzling over it when I was first beginning, not to read the *Phenomenology*, but to teach it. If there is any relation between what Fichte does here and what Hegel does, it extends to the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* only; and it illustrates why Hegel criticizes Fichte in the Preface more than it illuminates what Hegel does.

As for Schelling, there is no doubt that his ideal 'history of self-consciousness in epochs' influenced Hegel (though not as much as it influenced Hyppolite).⁷ But Kainz sends us rather to an *obiter dictum* which Schelling himself (as far as I know) never followed up:

Now we do in fact also maintain that no individual consciousness could be posited, with all the determinations it is posited with, and which necessarily belong to it, unless the whole of history had gone before. . . . Historiography, which otherwise has no object save that of explaining the present state of the world, could thus equally set out from the current situation and infer to past history, and it would be no uninteresting endeavor to see how the whole of the past could be derived from this in a strictly necessary manner.⁸

This is easily the most suggestive anticipation of what Hegel does that Kainz (or Hyppolite) have found for us (though neither of them focused attention on the crucial passage). But it leaves the basic puzzle of Hegel's *Phenomenology* untouched, since Schelling does not say why the derivation of the 'whole of the past' from the 'present state of the world' 'with strict necessity' would be interesting. Instead he explains that the *ganze Vergangenheit* that is 'deducible' does not include a great mass of people and happenings that are not properly 'historical'. This discussion too is helpful, because it clearly parallels the way in which Hegel thought that an individual self-consciousness could recall and appropriate the

formative process of the *Weltgeist*. But the optimistic version of Kant's critical conception of history that Schelling goes on to outline (history is characterized for him by an 'infinite *tendency to progress*') is far removed from the 'reverence towards fate' which Hegel always preached upon historical texts; and it is even further removed from the culmination of Hegel's effort of historical remembrance in an 'absolute knowledge' which leaves all 'infinite tendencies' behind. It is this climax that we have to comprehend if we are going to thread our way through the labyrinth that Hegel constructed. So we should do well to examine what Hegel says about it, and see whether he himself offers us any structural analogies which help to orientate the beginning reader.

In fact he tried very hard to do this; and although his analogies are not perfect, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is far easier to interpret from inside than it is through external comparison with other literary projects either proposed or carried out by his contemporaries. This is not to say, however, that we must seek to discover the 'inward form' that is 'unique' to the book. For Hegel's own suggestions direct our attention to a type of literary work which is more variegated, less rigorously structured, than the class of geometry textbooks, certainly, but nevertheless quite easy to identify and to categorize. He offers us three images that we have to combine in order to understand what is supposed to be happening: the image of a path or a way to be travelled (a way that has already been made and mapped, not one that we have to make or discover for ourselves); the image of a ladder to be climbed; and the image of a plant growing through the cycle of its seasons to the point where the fruit can be plucked. Since the fruit here is 'absolute knowledge', perhaps we might hazard the conjecture that the fruit that is meant is an apple (Hegel later mentions an acorn and an oak, but at that point he wants to use the analogy in an opposite sense – the acorn is the *seed* at the beginning, not the fruit on the tree at the end).

This is the first analogy that the reader is actually offered, and it is not explicitly offered as a structural guide to the book but as a criticism of the ordinary view of the history of philosophy.* It is not clear that Hegel's book is about the history of philosophy generally, but it is clear enough that it deals with the organic development of his ideal of philosophy as *system*, so the connection is not really a difficult one to make. That we are supposed to identify the fruit as an apple is never suggested, however. If my suggestion is right – and Hegel's own development of the other analogies will show that it is – then his book begins by proclaiming its own sphinxlike character. It begins with a riddle.

The 'ladder' simile is explicitly connected by Hegel with his own undertaking. For it is at the climax of his general discussion in the Preface, when he brings together his two main theses – that 'truth is the whole, and its form is a scientific system' and that 'the Absolute is Subject as

well as Substance' – that Hegel remarks that 'the individual has the right to demand that Science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint'.¹⁰ In the very next paragraph he says that 'this coming into being of science generally, or of *Wissen*, is what this *Phenomenology of Spirit* sets forth'; and he explains why the simple inversion of the standpoint of consciousness into the standpoint of philosophic science must be pictured as a ladder, by telling us that 'in order to beget the element of science which is its pure concept' the 'immediate spirit' of sensory consciousness (which is strictly 'spiritless') must 'work itself through a long road'. The 'ladder' image thus forms a bridge between the doctrine of a simple opposition of standpoints (with no possibility of a direct conversion from one to the other) and the developed conception of a *pathway* from one to the other. The bud-'flower'-fruit image has already suggested that the overarching cultural history in which the new 'Science' forms the harvest phase must be viewed as an organic sequence of reversals or conversion experiences. But at the same time the experience of conversion as an immediate transition, mediated by nothing more than the preaching of the word, or the proclamation of a new gospel, has been laughed to scorn. The 'ladder' is offered as a religious image of that 'seriousness, suffering, patience and labor of the negative',¹¹ which is requisite in place of the edifying talk of Jacobi, Schleiermacher, and a host of others if we are to share in 'the life of God and divine cognition'; and the laborious journey over the path travelled by the *Weltgeist* is a philosophic image of how the history of human culture has to be appropriated before the 'sun-clear reports' and pistol-shot proclamations of Fichte can carry any conviction.¹²

That the 'ladder' is a religious image is not stated, but its religious status is implicit in the fact that the ladder stretches between the earth of ordinary consciousness and the heavenly 'aether' of philosophic science. Hegel underlines the fact that his concept of 'Spirit' is much closer to Christian tradition and language than other contemporary formulations such as 'the moral world-order'; and his careful explanation of why the name 'God' is more of a hindrance than a help to the philosopher would make no sense if we did not see that his own aim is to define what that name refers to. His 'ladder' is a religious image because it does imply the otherness of the world which it leads to. The 'journey' image is a more ultimate one for Hegel – and hence it is developed much more fully – because the otherness of the destination (though it is real enough) still belongs to this world and this life. The 'aether' of Spirit (or of science) is an element in which we must learn to breathe and to live here and now. The ladder we have to climb is therefore not a 'thread of light' which we can follow (as Dante did) all the way to the presence of God in the other world and the other life. Indeed, the turning of the spiritual eye towards the other world (which Plato advocated, and the Church

accomplished) has had to be slowly and painfully reversed again; Hegel's 'science of experience' is the final consummation of this reversal. He wants to make 'the lucidity, which only the things in the heavens used to have, work its way into the darkness and confusion in which the sense of this world's affairs lay'.¹³ So he is borrowing Jacob's ladder both to take us to Heaven and to bring us back to earth.

The ladder that Jacob saw (and Dante after him) was 'set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God', who prophesied for him not a heavenly but an earthly fate – that his seed would be spread abroad over all the earth, and that 'in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed'.¹⁴ That Hegel had this latter prophecy in mind I cannot definitely show; but only the two-way traffic on Jacob's ladder makes the ladder image appropriate to the connection between the earth of consciousness and the 'aether' of science as Hegel conceived it.

But Jacob saw his ladder in a dream. Is not this typical of the rapturous enthusiasm of the religion of feeling to which Hegel was violently hostile? Can it be right to think that he had borrowed an image from one of the most famous stories of a religious dreamer, when he himself speaks so contemptuously of 'God's own to whom he gives wisdom in sleep; what they in fact receive and bring to birth in their sleep are of course dreams'?¹⁵

This irony is far from conclusive against the interpretation I am proposing, because it is typical of the Preface as a whole; and we can quite properly take it as implying only a criticism of those who put Jacob's dream on the same level with that mighty wrestling all night with the angel, which left him lame for the rest of his days;¹⁶ or, more immediately, it is a criticism of those who mistake images for science, or the orientating work of the Preface for the seriousness, suffering, patience and labour of the book itself. The Preface ends, we may note, by condemning those who think Plato's myths more important than the *Parmenides*, but this has not stopped Hegel from using the myth of the Cave himself, just as Plato did, for purposes of orientation – though, as we have already seen, he uses it for orientation in the opposite direction.¹⁷ This sting in the tail of the Preface is certainly no accident, and we should take to heart its implications, both for the interpretation of the Preface itself, and for the 'scientific worthlessness' of this present discourse. But we must still try to follow the argument where it leads.

That it is right to look for the origin of Hegel's images in the Scriptures is finally confirmed by his treatment of the most experiential and this-worldly, hence the most philosophical and most fully developed, of them all: the journey. This is the last image to be presented in the Preface, but it was the first that Hegel thought of, for he had employed it already in his Introduction; and there can be no doubt that he means to compare

his book not just to a typical life-journey, but to the climax of that quite singular and unique life-journey that provides the fundamental image of Christian experience: the Passion of Christ or the 'way of the Cross'.

In the order of exposition (which we should follow because we are maintaining that the book provides better orientation for its readers than we can find by going outside it, even when we go no further than our external knowledge of the order of its composition), this comparison is made gradually. First we are told only that the way is long and involves hard labour because we must attend to, and linger over, what goes unnoticed or is reduced to mere child's play in the natural course of our self-conscious *Bildung*. We need not, indeed we cannot, suffer what the World-Spirit has gone through in order that we may enjoy this heedless, or playful, process of self-formation; but the achievement of philosophical insight requires that we should appreciate all that suffering and patience. We cannot say yet that there is anything very Christlike about the much-emphasized 'patience' of the World-Spirit, but we can recognize that what Hegel is asking of us depends upon the same imaginative capacity that made it possible for Christians to claim that God had taken 'all the sins of the world' upon himself in the person of a single man.

Our task involves patience and labour but little suffering. What is familiar has to be made strange in order that we may take it seriously. The very first thing that we have to realize is that the form of conceptualization, which we so readily take for granted, is a state of death for all that is fixed in it: 'Not the life that shrinks from death, and keeps itself pure of devastation, but that which endures it, and maintains itself in it is the life of the spirit.'¹⁸ This does seem reminiscent of Christ's death and Resurrection, and the seemingly gratuitous comment that Hegel adds about 'powerless beauty' ('beauty hates the understanding because it expects this of her which she cannot achieve') helps to confirm the reference to the miracle that the Apostles proclaimed. For Greece was the culture of the beauty which lacked the power to overcome the barbarians, and the mighty arm of the understanding that achieved universal Empire was Rome. Thus, when we study the transition from *polis* to Empire, and the ring of *Gestalten* round the manger at Bethlehem (as we find ourselves doing more than once in the course of the book), we are coming to terms with the most elementary transition in our everyday consciousness, the transition from sense to thought.

The 'pathway' of Hegel's *Phenomenology* begins from this descent into the eternal living death of thought as 'understanding'. What we have to bring about (once we have comprehended what thought is) is resurrection of our thoughts as self-moving *Begriffe*, concepts that circle upon themselves infinitely in a self-consciousness that is not buried in the night of what is 'familiar' because long-forgotten. The historical and mathematical modes of inquiry must both be rejected, because these approaches con-

centrate attention on 'truth' in its understandable sense; and even the newest 'formal' philosophies, though they claim to be philosophies of organic form, must be rejected because they ignore the transcended phases of truth's organic growth as being merely 'error' that has been decisively superseded. All such views are just the presently existing forms of living death.¹⁹ Truth must be comprehended in its development, and therefore the 'science of experience' must be a prolonged wrestling match with the forms of 'error' out of which it has emerged. (Hegel may speak of 'lingering' with each *Gestalt* – *verweilen*, the word that Faust promises not to use imperatively – but the 'magic power that turns the negative into being' is not the less strenuous because there is no blood and sweat in it.)²⁰

The worst difficulty Hegel faces in describing the wrestling (*die Anstrengung des Begriffs*)²¹ is created by the fact that the struggle and the victory go hand in hand. Thus he emphasizes what an effort is involved in speculative thinking, but at the same time he wants to say that speculation is a simple seeing, that we observe a pattern in the struggle because we are contemplating it from above. The quasi-historical character of his *Phenomenology* is determined by the need to create a distance between the struggling and the watching. But it is still our consciousness which re-enacts the struggle of the *Weltgeist*, just as much as it is our self-consciousness that watches what happens. That the standpoints of earth (the struggle) and Heaven (the contemplation) are thus dialectically united in our thought is what makes the book so difficult to read. The most that Hegel can do about this in the Preface is to tell us what to expect, and to contrast his procedure with the simple 'heavenly' mode of inspiration, and the simple 'earthly' one of common sense. But his contemptuous remarks about the common-sense reader who relies on prefaces, and the inspired writer who can't be bothered to write a preface, are a warning to us that we must study the book itself if we want to understand this methodological part of his Preface properly. In this part of the discussion he gives us no image of his road, but only the contrasting images of a road that takes one nowhere out of one's armchair, and a road that is not there at all – and finally a rude comment about 'scientifically worthless myths'.

The goal which the Preface keeps continually before our eyes – whether in its true form or in its various illusory alternative guises – is the heavenly one of 'participation in the divine life'.²² The Introduction, by contrast, is quite worldly. In the Preface there is a continual tension between the religious aims and language and the severely philosophical doctrine; the Introduction is more consistently philosophical in its language, as well as its thought. Yet the image of the 'pathway', which is quite consistent with the most sober and commonsensical description of what is ahead of us, is rather surprisingly called a 'way of despair' (*Verzweiflung*).²³ This

is surprising because, although it is obviously necessary to emphasize that the dialectical difficulties and uncertainties of the *Weltgeist* are real (in contrast to the comfortable armchair doubt to Descartes, or of philosophers generally), despair is not a very noteworthy component in the organized 'science of the experience of consciousness'. The motto of the consciousness we shall observe is much more obviously the *nil desperandum* of the Trojan leader in Horace's famous ode. Consciousness is perpetually defeated, but it never despairs. The Spirit – and we who are its self-consciousness – learns and moves on after each defeat, while the *Gestalten* of consciousness itself are infinitely resourceful in their refusal to admit that they have been defeated.

It is essential to Hegel's conception of a '*Gestalt* of consciousness' that it can maintain itself, and in showing us why we must move on, Hegel is generally careful to show us also the shifts by which each *Gestalt* renders itself circular and so avoids moving. This is why the mood of our observant progress is so generally one of ironic amusement. To take the most crucial instance, even when consciousness comes to despair of itself and its life, officially and *ex professo* – in the 'Unhappy Consciousness' – we are made to see how resolutely it organizes life on that basis, how tightly it clings to the 'thread of light' that was mentioned in the Preface; and the way that it rounds itself out by finding forgiveness and justification even in this life provides us with the stepping-stone to the supremely self-confident consciousness of Reason.

Only once is 'despair' really present and dominant in a *Gestalt* of consciousness. It is the necessary complement of the initial self-consciousness of the free ego; despair is the fate of its independence and self-will. Only a really genuine despair can mediate the transition from the life-and-death struggle to servitude. Hegel recognizes the possibility of a subjection that is merely expedient and 'lives to fight another day' – or of a servitude in which independence and self-will have merely gone into hiding. But he tells us clearly that this is not the servitude in which the *Bildung* of self-consciousness properly begins. (This spirit of *Eigensinn* is rather the shift by which the *Gestalt* of the struggle preserves itself, and refuses to accept defeat.)²⁴ The *Bildung* of self-consciousness begins with the real 'shaking of the subject' through the fear of death;²⁵ and Hegel probably wants to make us look for, and linger over, the significance of this 'beginning of wisdom' when he calls the road to absolute knowledge a 'way of despair'.

All the same, his calling the whole path 'a way of despair' (rather than 'a way of defeat') is paradoxical, and the resulting puzzlement must immediately cause us to fasten on the description of the *Phenomenology* as the 'way of the soul which traverses the series of its configurations as stations marked out for it by its nature' that Hegel has just given us at this point. 'Stations of the soul' on a 'way of despair' can only be the

'stations of the Cross'; and this identification offered us at the beginning of our journey is confirmed in the last sentence of the book, where 'history comprehended' is called 'the "skull-place" (i.e. Golgotha) of the Absolute Spirit'. If we go through the book with this analogy as our guide, then when we return to the Preface at the end – as we should – the language of death and resurrection that we find there becomes visibly the completion of the religious story with the resurrection into a new life.

But if Hegel's *Phenomenology* is thus modelled on the image of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, then we can say what kind of book it is after all. Just as Spinoza's *Ethics* is philosophy modelled on a geometry book, so Hegel's *Phenomenology* is philosophy modelled on a manual of devotional discipline; and since several types of religious devotion are discussed and dismissed by Hegel himself, we can be more precise. It is not models of Christian life like the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis (which Hegel was certainly familiar with) or *Pilgrim's Progress* (which he probably never heard of) that the *Phenomenology* resembles. The closest parallel is a work like Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, but it is doubtful whether Hegel knew that little treatise existed. The work he did know was Dante's *Divine Comedy*. His *Phenomenology* should be read (so far as its literary form is concerned) as the 'human comedy' in which the great religious symbols of the Passion and Resurrection receive a philosophical significance within the bounds of a logical comprehension of 'experience'. He does for the 'age of knowledge' what Dante did for the 'age of faith'.

Apart from this great religious journey, which the poet remembers and interprets as he tells it, there is a contemporary work of philosophical 'devotion', which Hegel undoubtedly had in mind as a stark contrast to his own book. This is the *Bestimmung des Menschen* of Fichte.²⁶ Dante goes from despair through vision to faith; Fichte moves from doubt through knowledge to faith (with the vision both of a better world and of a higher life). Hegel proceeds from doubt through faith (the 'Unhappy Consciousness') to knowledge. His book is written in the declared belief that a new world is dawning, but there is no vision of the future in it. The crucial difference between Hegel and both predecessors I have identified is that for him there is no 'beyond'. The intellectual world, the aether of science, is 'the daylight of the present'. Hegel's ladder, like the rainbow, returns to earth. 'The concept', as he taught his students at Jena at about the time he was first conceiving the *Phenomenology*, 'is the mediator between itself and life.'²⁷ It is true, to be sure, that since the *Phenomenology* leads us to the *Logic*, we can (if we want) think of the 'System' itself as the Hegelian analogue of Dante's *Paradise* or of the noumenal Kingdom of Ends. But this parallel only illustrates a contrast,

since the Hegelian System is a Platonic Heaven of Ideas, not a Christian Heaven of Souls.

A closer parallel to Christian salvation is offered by the 'Concept's mediation between itself and life'. Because of this, we might say that – like Dante's earthly pilgrimage – Hegel's pilgrimage of Reason ends in the Earthly Paradise. This is what is suggested by two Greek allusions in the Preface that we have not yet considered. The famous comment 'Truth is the Bacchanalian revel'²⁸ means not just that speculative truth is alive and dialectical but that it is a whole, embracing the life that is not speculative and self-consciously transparent, but natural, spontaneous, and unconscious or dark. On the other hand, Hegel also claims that 'existence is Nous, as Anaxagoras first recognized its essence to be'.²⁹ This takes us to the opposite extreme, but still in Greek terms. Just as the worship of Bacchus was an acknowledgment that we 'live in God' in our sensory existence, so the doctrine of Anaxagoras was the first clear formulation of the view that the God in whom we live and move is Reason.

To unite these two extremes successfully would be to bring the beginning and the end of the *Phenomenology* together – the perfect mediation of the Concept between itself and life. To unite them in the way in which the Greeks did would be to regain the perfect form of 'natural consciousness' – in other words, it would be 'Paradise regained'. I am not sure quite how long Hegel envisaged this, except that it did not mean returning to the historic paradise of natural consciousness in the 'religion of art'. When Hegel realized that a new culture was not soon to be born and that the future was dark and enigmatic, he stopped talking about 'the Concept mediating between itself and life'. The *Phenomenology* itself was the only interpretation he ever gave for this mediation, and the *Phenomenology* is not a work of political prophecy. So it does not matter that Hegel's earthly Paradise remains – like Dante's – empty.

It is not the parallel, but the contrast, that is important this time. The Heavenly Paradise of Dante becomes for Hegel simply 'our' philosophical standpoint of contemplative observation, as we watch the Divine Tragedy of the *Weltgeist* give place to the Human Comedy. Far more interesting than this displacement of Paradise, in which the difference is so radical that the comparison is hardly enlightening, is the transformation of the moments of *Hell* and *Purgatory*. Fichte's Hell is the horror of being swallowed up in the determinism of nature as a whole. He is purged of this fear through the counsel of a 'Spirit', which, like Dante's Beatrice (though a bit more Socratically), explains to him the significance of his natural knowledge.

For Hegel, the displacement of *Paradise* itself renders this dialogue function superfluous. His Hell has a much deeper affinity with that of Dante, in that for Hegel, too, the singular consciousness is damned, and

only human communities can travel the way of salvation on the Mount of Purgatory. But his Hell is one of failure, not one of wrong choice; in this it resembles Dante's Limbo. For in the *Phenomenology* the singular self-consciousness finds only an empty tomb (the Holy Sepulchre).³⁰ When it loses that, it can finally be transformed into Reason. Singular Reason, however, finds first the skull that was supposedly never in that tomb,³¹ and beyond that it finds only a Last Judgment that is mute (in 'Reason giving and testing Laws'). Only the human community, having eaten of the apple of Greek philosophy and been expelled from the Eden of Greek poetic and political achievement, begins to find its way up the steep slope of social *Bildung*. But this time the road leads not to a skull but to the guillotine that turns the self into a skull (Hegel's mountain being, of course, the one on this side of the world that Dante was unable to climb, not the divinely organized world in which every sinner knows his sin and stands ready to aid his neighbour).

Whether the comparison with Dante will help a beginning reader I do not know. Certainly it can mislead him. Dante is, after all, more like John Bunyan than he is like Hegel (who has nothing at all in common with Bunyan, as his estimate of the super-sensible moral world beyond the guillotine suffices to show). Hegel is interested in changing our conception of the world and of our place in it, not in order to change our behaviour but rather in order to show us why we behave as we do (so far as he has a practical aim at all). Because his concern is exclusively with our self-knowledge, the *Phenomenology* has affinities with the work of a cloistered teacher like Bonaventure which it does not have with that of Dante. But in that it is a 'science of experience' inspired by Christian canons, it is more like the *Commedia* than it is like anything else.

Finally, however, in terms of the problems of its own time, it is a definition of the 'vocation of man'. And it necessarily has affinities with works (like Fichte's) that it directly opposes which it cannot have with the productions of an earlier age. But it derives its indubitable uniqueness from posing the problem of man's destiny in terms which its own age had forgotten how to use, not from posing the problem in a way in which it had never been posed before. That we must all travel the way of the Cross together is one of those doctrines we are so familiar with that we have forgotten it. The finding of the right response to the Delphic injunction ('Know thyself!') in this doctrine was too paradoxical for the pennyplain individualism and utilitarian optimism of an enlightened century. But it would not have surprised Augustine.

Notes

1 Howard Kainz, ed., *Hegel's Phenomenology, Part I: Analysis and Commentary* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1976), p. 6. Kainz's entire discussion occupies pp. 5-9.

2 Except for some other works of Spinoza, and possibly some conscious imitations of this primary model, of whose very existence I remain complacently ignorant.

3 Kainz found it in Helmut Rehder's essay 'The Significance of Hegel's *Phenomenology* for Literature Criticism', in *A Hegel Symposium*, ed. Don Carlos Travis (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 133. We may remember that Croce, speaking not just of the *Phenomenology* but of the system as a whole, called Hegel a 'poet of philosophy' in *What Is Living and What Is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, transl. Douglas Ainslie (London: Macmillan & Co., 1915).

4 *Briefe*, ed. Hoffmeister, I, 161.

5 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), *Werke*, I, 227-46, ed. and transl. Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), pp. 203-17. The phrase 'pragmatic history of the human spirit', quoted by both Hyppolite and Kainz, is applied by Fichte to his *Wissenschaftslehre* at *Werke* I, 222 (Heath and Lachs, pp. 198-9).

6 Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure*, I, 14, transl. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 8. Hyppolite does not give a direct reference to Fichte, but refers us to Guérout's *Evolution et structure de la doctrine de la science de Fichte*, I, 225. I suspect that Hyppolite did not look at the relevant section of Fichte himself.

7 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, *Werke*, III, 395-531, transl. Peter Heath, pp. 47-154. A simple comparison of this part of Schelling's table of contents with the table of contents in Hyppolite will suffice, I think, to establish the influence; cf. *Genèse et structure*, I, 14, transl. Cherniak and Heckman, p. 9. It must remain to the reader who studies Hegel and Hyppolite together to decide whether the influence was on the whole beneficial rather than baneful.

8 Heath, p. 201; *Werke*, III, 590; cf. Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure*, I, 44 (Cherniak and Heckman, p. 40).

9 Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1968ff.), cited hereafter as *NKA* (*Neue kritische Ausgabe*), IX, 10; Miller, section 2. The rigorous alternative of *Beistimmung oder Widerspruch* against which this analogy is set is especially characteristic of Fichte. But it is Kant's characterization of pre-critical philosophy (in the 'Dialectic of Pure Reason') that Hegel needs to overthrow.

10 *NKA*, IX, 23; Miller, section 26.

11 *NKA*, IX, 18; Miller, section 19.

12 *NKA*, IX, 24, 38; Miller, sections 27, 51. Hegel says we can find the religious form of conversion anywhere, and can 'easily dream up something for ourselves and put on airs about it' (*NKA*, IX, 13-14; Miller, section 9). But he identifies the apostle of philosophical conversion unmistakably. This critique of Fichte is quite distinct from the attack upon those (Schelling's students certainly, and perhaps also Schelling himself) whose philosophic *science* is itself undeveloped because their *method* is only a 'formal' (or mechanical) one.

13 *NKA*, IX, 13; Miller, section 8. (Whether Hegel is thinking of Dante we cannot be sure. But it is a plausible hypothesis. The reference to Plato's forcible liberation of his prisoners from the Cave is unmistakable.)

14 Genesis 28: 12-14.

15 *NKA*, IX, 14; Miller, section 10.

16 See Genesis 32: 24–32.

17 *NKA*, IX, 48; Miller, section 71.

18 *NKA*, IX, 27; Miller, section 32.

19 *NKA*, IX, 38; Miller, sections 51–2. This contemporary state is characterized as 'flaying', an image that derives from Greek mythology; cf. Apollo and Marsyas. By implication, Hegel is accusing those he attacks of accepting the values and standards of the secular Enlightenment, and of not grasping the speculative significance of Christianity.

20 Cf. *NKA*, IX, 25 and 27; Miller, sections 29 and 32.

21 *NKA*, IX, 41; Miller section 58.

22 See *NKA*, IX, 12–14, 17–19, 20–1, 22, 40, 46–8; Miller, sections 6–10, 16–20, 23, 25, 55, 68–70. We should not forget that the 'Bacchanalian revel' (*NKA*, IX, 35; Miller, section 47) is the most primitive and immediate mode of participation in the divine life (see *NKA*, IX, 387; Miller, section 723). And the fact that the 'shaking of the Subject' in the speculative proposition is applied first to Kantian self and then to 'God' – and the use of the name 'God' is then set aside for the sake of it – can hardly be accidental (*NKA*, IX, 42–5; Miller, sections 60–6; cf. IX, 20–1; Miller, section 23). When the whole pattern is considered, it seems to be impossible to resist the claim that a reference to the death and resurrection of the God-Man is intended at *NKA*, IX, 27 (Miller, section 32).

23 *NKA*, IX, 56; Miller, section 78.

24 See *NKA*, IX, 115–16; Miller, section 196 to the end.

25 *NKA* IX, 114, 115; Miller, sections 194, 196.

26 Hegel may also be mindful of the newly published *Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (1806). The title is certainly suggestive, but he does not echo it in his Preface (which was the only part of the book written late enough to be affected by it). *Faith and Knowledge* is testimony enough of his critical study of *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*.

27 Rosenkranz, p. 182; Harris and Knox, p. 257.

28 *NKA*, IX, 35; Miller, section 47. *NKA*, IX, 387 (Miller, section 723) either shows that this is only a very picturesque but very misleading metaphor, because it is valid only from the standpoint of ordinary consciousness; or else, as I say, it implies that 'Truth is the whole' in a much more radical sense than its apparent cashing out as 'scientific system' indicates. The doctrine that 'the concept is the mediator between itself and life' seems to swing the balance firmly in favour of the second alternative.

29 *NKA*, IX; Miller, section 55.

30 *NKA*, IX, 126; Miller, section 217.

31 *NKA*, IX, 190; Miller, section 343.

Hegel's *Phenomenology* as introduction to science

William Maker

Contemporary developments in Continental thought which have their roots in Nietzsche, which run through the works of Heidegger and Gadamer and perhaps reach their most radical articulation in the writings of recent French thinkers, indicate the extent to which traditional notions concerning interpretation, text authorship, and especially the idea of a 'correct reading' of a text have been brought more and more into question. Serious doubts have arisen as to whether any single interpretation – of a text, idea, historical period etc. – can be designated as adequate. Central to these doubts is the question of whether historical imbeddedness – the historicity and the immanently perspectival character of consciousness – can be overcome. The issues and problems connected with these questions are many and run deep, challenging at the most basic level the idea of autonomous, objective and radically 'scientific' reason which has, as an ideal, guided Western thought for centuries.

What do these issues have to do with Hegel, and specifically with his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (hereafter, *PhG*)? In recent years, dismay over the failure of interpreters to come to agreement over the *PhG* has led increasingly to the belief that no genuine, comprehensive, and finally adequate interpretation of that work is possible. Thus, it might be suggested that the case history of *PhG* interpretation provides *prima facie* evidence in favour of the general (and generally negative) views on text interpretation mentioned above. But a second point of connection is much broader and concerns our fundamental understanding of reason. For the *PhG*, as Hegel's declared introduction to science, is meant to indicate how consciousness can overcome its merely perspectival and imbedded character and how, thereby, a standpoint of autonomous objective reason – the standpoint of science – can be attained.

In what follows, I contend that the problem of interpreting the *PhG* is rooted in a serious prevailing misunderstanding of how Hegel intended

the *PhG* to function as an introduction to a standpoint of objective reason. I suggest that the *PhG* can be interpreted in a comprehensive and adequate manner and that such an interpretation is grounded in a new understanding of how the work is meant to introduce science.

One of the most vexing problems confronting Hegel scholars today is understanding the *PhG* in the role assigned to it by its author as the introduction to science, or, to use Hegel's words, the 'deduction of the concept of science'.¹ In recent years the deeper question has arisen of whether it is even *possible* to understand the work in that manner. Despite the ever-increasing number of works devoted to the *PhG*, it has been suggested by several scholars – amongst them Wim van Dooren and most recently J. N. Findlay² – that we are still without a satisfactory commentary on Hegel's first book over 170 years since its appearance. This state of affairs has led Otto Pöggeler (and others) to ask whether the *PhG* actually presents us with a coherent argument which leads consecutively from beginning to end and is susceptible to a philosophically reconstructive commentary: does the book have a genuine argument at all, or is it only a collection of related themes whose sequential ordering is more or less arbitrary? Pöggeler doubts whether the *PhG* is even a book at all in the sense of 'something fully finished and completed'. He contends that 'the composition of the work can scarcely exhibit an ordering which springs unequivocally out of the beginning point of the work and remains unproblematic in its unfolding'. And in agreement with van Dooren and Findlay he declares, 'Despite this return to the *PhG* in regard to an attempt at an interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* we still have not proceeded beyond the first step.'³ Pöggeler contends that, if we are going to be able to grasp the idea of the *PhG*, what Hegel wanted must be understood: to this day 'it has not yet become correctly clear what Hegel wanted and what he achieved, wherein he was led as he sought to write an introduction to his system'.⁴

I agree with Pöggeler and others that we are still without a satisfactory commentary on the *PhG*. But unlike Pöggeler I am not convinced that the absence of a genuine commentary must be attributed to the fact that the *PhG* as written fails to present us with a cohesive, interconnected argument (or to the fact that Hegel supposedly changed his mind about what he was doing during the course of writing the *PhG*). The absence of a commentary may rather be attributed to our failure to perceive what Hegel wanted when he sought to write an introduction to his system. The clue which will perhaps enable us to proceed beyond the first step in interpreting the *PhG* can be found by turning to the *Science of Logic* (hereafter, *WL*). We must focus on Hegel's self-understanding of the *PhG*, that is on his conception of the role and accomplishments of the *PhG*, as this self-understanding is presented in that work – the *WL* – whose concept the *PhG* is supposed to deduce. If, as Pöggeler says, an

understanding of the idea of the *PhG* requires that we understand what Hegel wanted to do, then it is in the *WL*, I shall argue, that Hegel informs us both of what he wanted to do and of what he felt he had done in the introduction to his system of science. I shall first attempt to show why we are still today without a satisfactory commentary on the *PhG*. I shall argue that the received view of Hegel's *PhG* as an introduction to science is inadequate because it cannot account for Hegel's self-understanding of the *PhG* as presented in the opening sections of the *WL* (the Introduction and 'With what must the science begin?'). Second, I shall argue that in these opening sections Hegel presents a clue as to just what he wished to accomplish in the introduction to his science: namely, to overcome the standpoint of consciousness altogether and thereby to attain to the standpoint of science as one of objective, autonomous reason, which Hegel offers us in the *WL*.

I The received view of the *PhG* as introduction to science

Although there is disagreement in the received view as to whether the *PhG* presents anything like an argument, and further disagreement about just what this argument might consist in, there is a consensus that the aim of the *PhG* as an introduction to science is a positive one.⁶ The *PhG* was designed, according to the received view, either to present a demonstrative argument whose function is to establish and ground the nature and validity of absolute knowing, or, according to those who see the argument as more rhetorical and persuasive than demonstrative, to elevate the reader propaedeutically to the level of absolute knowledge and to convince him thereby of its validity.⁷ Although there is disagreement concerning the exact manner of the argument, there is agreement that its aim is positive: it is to introduce science or deduce its concept whether through a rigorous demonstration of the truth and validity of a mode of absolute knowing or through an illustrative recapitulation of the steps to absolute knowing.⁸ Although the *PhG*'s manner of proceeding is seen to be original and unorthodox, its aim as an argument is found to be traditional and positive.

This positivity thesis concerning the aim of the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science is reinforced by the received view's interpretation of absolute knowing itself. According to this view absolute knowing as the concept of science deduced by the *PhG* stands as a determinate principle or structure of true knowing as such.⁹ Whether or not the argument of the *PhG* which leads to absolute knowing is a success is a matter of some debate in the received view.¹⁰ None the less, there is agreement that absolute knowing stands in Hegel's view as absolutely

true, actual and scientific knowing and as such constitutes for him the concept of science.¹¹

What exactly is absolute knowing, and how does the received view understand it as the foundational principle, the beginning point, of science? Here again we can find agreement among holders of the received view: absolutely true and unquestionably valid knowing is held by Hegel, they argue, to consist in the pure reflective self-knowing of an absolute self-consciousness or absolute subject. Since the *PhG* culminates in absolute knowing with the establishment of the identity of subject and object, this absolute knowing as absolute self-consciousness is seen to be the aboriginal unifying structure in which the necessary interrelation and intermediation of subject and object – of knowing and what is known – are achieved. As such, this structure is claimed by Hegel to be paradigmatic for any and all knowing.¹² The coming to absolute knowing *via* the *PhG* is thus seen to establish what true knowing as such is, and thereby to have deduced the concept of science. The *WL* is then seen to begin with and rest upon this structure of absolute knowing as its foundational and methodological principle. The logical categories of the science are seen to be generated out of this structure through the self-reflective self-knowing of absolute self-consciousness.¹³

In summation: according to the received view, absolute knowing as the deduced concept of science (1) is seen to be an actual and true knowing; (2) is seen to consist in a determinate relational structure whose elements or poles are subject and object (or subject/object, object/subject); (3) the logical science is seen to rest upon this structure as its presupposition, to have its nature or validity as science grounded in this structure; and (4) to have its logical categories generated out of the reflective activity of this structure of absolute self-consciousness as it engages in self-knowing. It is thus contended that the *PhG* was meant by Hegel – at least originally – to establish the structure of absolute self-consciousness as the principle of absolutely true knowing and thus as the concept of science.

II Hegel's understanding of the *PhG* as introduction to science

It is my contention that this traditional view of the relation of the *PhG* to the *WL* is neither in agreement with nor provides a satisfactory accounting for what Hegel himself says in the opening of the *WL* concerning the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science, concerning the nature of logical science and its method, and concerning the beginning of this science and what is required for this beginning.

I shall argue generally, in opposition to the received view, that both the *PhG* as introduction, and absolute knowing as the deduced concept, must be understood *negatively*. Which is to say that even as the deduction

of the concept of science, the aim of the *PhG* is not to establish and ground absolute knowing, embodied in the structure of consciousness, as true knowing *überhaupt*. (The aim is not to establish a structure of absolute self-consciousness as the foundational principle for autonomous, objective reason.) I shall contend that absolute knowing, as the deduced concept which *does* constitute the beginning point of the science, is, according to Hegel, not a true or actual knowing and not a determinate structure or methodological principle for the constitution of science. I shall further show that according to Hegel this science does not begin in or with or base itself on a reflective structure of the ego or self-consciousness, and that the *PhG* does not serve to deduce the concept of science by in any way predetermining or grounding the method, manner or nature of scientific cognition. I shall argue that it is Hegel's claim (1) that the nature, method and validity of logical science can only be established *within* this science and not prior to it, and (2) that, none the less, absolute knowing is the deduced concept of science and that the *PhG* is designed and carried out as the introduction to this science. My aim will be to show that the received view's account of absolute knowing cannot reconcile the following claims made by Hegel in the opening of the *WL*: that logic begins without presuppositions while the *PhG* is none the less the presupposition for the *WL*; further, that the concept of science or logic cannot be in any way predetermined and that none the less the *PhG* is the deduction of the concept of science.¹⁴ Any adequate account of the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science must be able to explain these apparently contradictory claims of Hegel's.¹⁵ My positive thesis is that to make sense of these claims by Hegel both the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science and absolute knowing as the deduced concept must be understood as radically negative and further that clues in the *WL* concerning the introduction to his science support this thesis.

'With what must the science begin?' is where Hegel actually informs us how absolute knowing leads to or constitutes the beginning of science. Hegel tells us here that logic begins in or with absolute or pure knowing, that this pure knowing is the concept of science and is the result or outcome of the *PhG* and the truth of consciousness (*WL*: Glockner, pp. 71–3; Miller, pp. 68–9).¹⁶ We must ask: according to Hegel, is this pure knowing an actual and true knowing which is embodied in a determinate structure taken up in the *WL* as its constitutive or methodological principle? Does the *PhG* deduce the concept of science by establishing what absolutely true and hence scientific cognition consists in? Both of these key theses of the received view are here denied by Hegel. The latter thesis is suspect in so far as Hegel informs us that 'it is the nature of cognition simply as such which is to be considered within the science of logic. . . . [T]o want the nature of cognition clarified *prior* to the science [*vor der Wissenschaft aber schon über das Erkennen ins reine*

kommen wollen] is to demand that it be considered outside the science; *outside* the science this cannot be accomplished, at least not in a scientific manner and such a manner is alone here in place' (WL: Glockner, p. 71; Miller, p. 68). Taken by itself, however, this statement denying the possibility of clarifying the nature of cognition prior to science and holding that it is just the task of science to do this does not itself fully undermine the received view. It could still be argued that the *PhG* comes to determine the structure or principle of scientific cognition which is only subsequently to be elucidated or unpacked in the logic proper. But what Hegel says next rules this out, too. He tells us that we begin in the *WL* with absolute or pure knowing as the deduced concept which results from the *PhG*. In so doing we begin in or with the 'determination of pure knowing' (WL: Glockner, p. 72; Miller, p. 69). What then is this pure knowing which has resulted from the *PhG* as the 'ultimate, absolute truth of consciousness' (WL: Glockner, p. 71; Miller, p. 68)? Is it, as the received view maintains, some determinate structure or principle of cognition which now merely awaits clarification or unfolding? Is this pure knowing constitutive of knowing as such? Is it even a knowing? Hegel's answer to these questions is decisively negative. He proceeds to tell us that in beginning with this pure knowing as 'what is there before us', as the outcome of the *PhG*, pure knowing is that which has 'sublated all reference to an other and to mediation; it is without any distinction and as thus distinctionless ceases itself to be knowing; what is present is only *simple immediacy*' (WL: Glockner, p. 72; Miller, p. 69). (A few pages later, Hegel speaks of this knowing as collapsing and vanishing into an undifferentiated unity in such a way that it 'leav[es] behind no difference from the unity and hence *nothing by which the latter could be determined*' [WL: Glockner, p. 77; Miller, p. 73; italics added].)"

According to Hegel, then, science, in beginning with the deduced concept as pure knowing, begins neither in nor with a knowing or with any *structure* of knowing at all. Further, it cannot be argued that this beginning point has some structure of knowing outside it, such as its *method* in terms of which 'simple immediacy' is to be considered. Such a reading is ruled out because Hegel holds (1) that method or form and content are *one* in his science (WL: Glockner, p. 37; Miller, pp. 43–4), (2) that 'the exposition of what can alone be the true method of logical science falls within the treatment of logic itself' (WL: Glockner, pp. 50–1; Miller, p. 53), that 'the account of scientific method . . . belongs to its content' and 'cannot be stated beforehand' but emerges 'as the final outcome and consummation of the whole exposition' (WL: Glockner, pp. 36–7; Miller, p. 43), and (3) because he holds that the very immanent and scientific character of this logic consists in the fact that we rid ourselves 'of all other reflections and opinions whatever' and take up 'what is there before us' (WL: Glockner, p. 72; Miller, p. 69). Hegel is

unequivocal on this point: just in its beginning with the concept of science deduced by the *PhG*, the logic *does not* begin in or with any knowing or structure of knowing, either as the object of scientific consideration or as the methodological or guiding principle for this consideration. Science begins rather with that absolute or pure knowing which, as the outcome and truth of the *PhG* 'hört somit selbst auf, Wissen zu sein'. In Hegel's mind, the outcome of the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science is *negative*. For not only does the absolute or pure knowing which the *PhG* results in cease in and of itself to be a knowing. Further, in this self-cessation, what that knowing was as a determinate describable structure – the structure of consciousness – also ceases to be, is eliminated or *aufgehoben*. In beginning with or in this self-cessation of absolute or pure knowing as the deduced concept, science does not begin with the reflective structure of the absolute ego or self-consciousness which subsequently comes to generate logical categories *via* some process of immanent self-reflection. As we saw, in his account of how the deduced concept comes to constitute the beginning of science, Hegel makes no mention of such a structure. What he *does* say about the deduced beginning point rules out the possibility of its being some such determinate structure or principle. For 'simple immediacy' as the beginning point is 'completely empty being' (WL: Glockner, p. 80; Miller, p. 75); it is 'pure indeterminateness' (WL: Glockner, p. 76; Miller, p. 72) as that which is 'without any distinction' within itself and which has 'sublated all reference' to anything other than itself (WL: Glockner, p. 72; Miller, p. 69).

According to Hegel, the deduced concept of science with which the *WL* begins cannot be any determinate principle or structure of knowing, for he tells us that what the logic begins with 'must be purely and simply *an* immediacy, or rather merely *immediacy* itself. Just as it cannot possess any determination relatively to anything else, so too it cannot contain within itself any determination, any content, for any such would be a distinguishing, and an interrelation of distinct moments and consequently a mediation' (WL: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70). If Hegel took absolute knowing as deduced concept to be a structure, then he would not speak of it as collapsing into a unity which is 'undifferentiated' (WL: Glockner, p. 78; Miller, p. 74), a unity which leaves 'behind no difference' by which it could be determined (WL: Glockner, p. 77; Miller, p. 73). If Hegel held that the science begins with a determinate reflective principle embodied in an absolute self-consciousness, then he would not hold that it begins with no determinacy either within itself or in relation to anything else. Nor could he hold that 'the beginning cannot be made with anything concrete, anything containing a relation *within itself*. . . . Consequently, that which constitutes the beginning, the beginning itself, is to be taken as something unanalysable, taken in its simply unfilled immediacy, and

therefore *as being*, as the completely empty being"¹⁸ (WL: Glockner, p. 80; Miller, p. 75).

Although Hegel's remarks make it clear that absolute knowing as the deduced concept is not the self-reflecting self-knowing absolute self-consciousness which it is traditionally taken to be, and that the *PhG* does not introduce science by somehow grounding, establishing or predetermining the nature of true and hence scientific cognition, they do not indicate just how the *PhG* functions to deduce the concept. That is, they do not indicate how the outcome of the *PhG*, in its being the deduction of the concept, leads to the self-cessation of absolute or pure knowing into indeterminateness. Nor do they tell us what the meaning or sense of this deduction is, or how it works. These are questions which we shall turn to below. None the less, that the outcome of the *PhG* as deduction of the concept is taken by Hegel to be a negative one is clear. Hegel tells us further that the beginning of his science is an 'absolute beginning', which means, according to him, that 'it may not presuppose anything' and 'must not be mediated by anything nor have a ground' (WL: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70). Rather, he says, this beginning 'is to be itself the ground of the entire science' (WL: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70; cf. Glockner, pp. 36–7; Miller, p. 43).

Now, however, we must confront our chief interpretative dilemma. For Hegel *also* asserts, in three separate places in both the Introduction to the WL and in 'With what must the science begin?', that this science *presupposes* the *PhG*: 'The concept of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology* of Spirit is nothing other than the deduction of it' (WL: Glockner, p. 45; Miller, p. 49; cf. Glockner, p. 71; Miller, p. 68; Glockner, p. 60; Miller, p. 60; and Glockner, pp. 43–4; Miller, p. 48). How then is the *PhG* to be understood as the necessary presupposition for science, as its mediation and as the deduction of its concept, if it is also held that science begins immediately (WL: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70). if 'not only the account of scientific method, but even the concept itself of the science as such belongs to its content . . . and cannot be stated beforehand' because it 'has its genesis in the course of the exposition and cannot therefore be premised' (WL: Glockner, pp. 36–7; Miller, p. 43)? How can the *PhG* be the presupposition which Hegel claims it is if, as he also states, the science begins without presuppositions (WL: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70)?

It is my contention that if any sense is to be made out of these seemingly mutually exclusive sets of claims, this sense is not to be found in the received view with its positive reading of the *PhG* as deduction and its positive – and as we have already shown, mistaken – understanding of absolute knowing as the deduced concept. Clearly, if the aim of the *PhG* as introduction were to be the establishing of the nature of true

cognition, and if absolute knowing as the deduced concept of science were to be a determinate structure of actual cognition (from out of which the logical categories are to be generated *via* a process of self-reflection), then the *WL* would begin in or with a determinate presupposition and it would have its ground outside itself. Only if the *PhG* as the presupposition for the *WL* is understood to have a radically negative outcome can we reconcile and make sense out of the above-mentioned claims and *also* understand Hegel's description of the *PhG* as a *self-sublating* mediation or presupposition for science (*WL*: Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 69). Understood in that negative manner, absolute knowing is, as Hegel says, a self-sublating or self-eliminating knowing and, as the deduced concept, constitutes the presuppositionless beginning point of science not in its being a knowing but rather in its self-elimination as a presupposed structure of knowing. The reconciliation of Hegel's apparently mutually exclusive claims thus lies in seeing that only a presupposition which is self-sublating, that is which has a radically negative outcome such as that sketched above, could be a mediation or presupposition for presuppositionless science.

How then are we to understand the *PhG* as the presupposition for presuppositionless science, as the necessary mediation which brings us to the point of an immediate beginning? As I understand it, it is Hegel's contention that the *PhG* functions as the mediation and presupposition for presuppositionless science just in so far as it serves to indicate that absolute knowing, the knowing arrived at by consciousness as its 'ultimate, absolute truth' – pure or utterly presuppositionless and self-grounding knowing – is *no knowing* at all. So the mediative function, the function of the *PhG* as the presupposition for presuppositionless science, consists in its revealing the fact that when consciousness' presupposed structure of cognition is brought by consciousness' immanent dialectic to its 'ultimate, absolute truth', this consists in the sublation of this knowing as a knowing and in the collapsing or vanishing of the foundational structure of this knowing – the structure of consciousness – into an indeterminate unity. Absolute knowing as the deduced concept of science is the presupposition for the beginning of presuppositionless science because it is the indication that absolutely presuppositionless knowing, that with which the science must begin, is no knowing at all and has no determinate structure. The *PhG* can then be understood as the presupposition for presuppositionless science not because it establishes, grounds or predetermines the nature or principles of true, valid and scientific cognition – for, according to Hegel, that can only be done within the logical science, and because it is done therein he claims this science has its ground within itself and begins without a presupposition. Rather, the *PhG* is the presupposition for presuppositionless science because it indicates what science must begin with if it is to begin without any presuppositions concerning knowing:

not with some knowing, but with the self-cessation of knowing understood as the knowing of consciousness, with this knowing's coming to establish itself as absolute. (When the presupposed structure of knowing with which the *PhG* begins – the structure of consciousness – is brought to its absolute self-grounding and self-legitimation – it comes in this absolute self-grounding to eliminate itself.) The *PhG* is the presupposition for presuppositionless science because it indicates the necessity of the radically indeterminate and presuppositionless character of the absolute beginning of philosophical science.

If Hegel is serious – and I take him to be utterly serious – when he says that method and content are and must be one in the science (*WL*: Glockner, pp. 36–8, 51–2; Miller, pp. 43–4, 54), when he says that the ground, the truth and the validity of logic cannot be established outside it, when he states that logic must begin 'without preliminary reflection' and 'cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection and laws of thinking' 'for these constitute part of its own content and have first to be established within the science', and when he states that the concept of logic itself 'has its genesis in the course of the exposition and cannot be premised' (*WL*: Glockner, pp. 36–7; Miller, p. 43), then the concept deduced by the *PhG* cannot consist in a determinate structure or principle of true and scientific knowing. According to Hegel, if science is to be truly radical and self-grounding, it cannot begin with any determinate method, definition or rule of procedure (*WL*: Glockner, pp. 50–1; Miller, p. 53; Glockner, p. 73; Miller, p. 70; Glockner, pp. 76–7; Miller, p. 72; Glockner, p. 77; Miller, p. 73; Glockner, p. 80; Miller, p. 75). And the necessity of understanding this radically negative state of affairs as requisite for the beginning of science is demonstrated by the *PhG* as the presupposition for science. Thus the *PhG* is not a presupposition for the science because it establishes no principle, method or ground for the science, and yet it is presupposition for the science because it shows why such a science cannot have any such external grounding.

How then are we to understand the task, the aim of the *PhG* as introduction to science? As the presupposition for presuppositionless science, the function of the *PhG* must be to show both *that* science cannot begin with any determinate structure or presupposition and *why*, if it is to be pure science, it cannot begin in that manner. Now according to Hegel, what science does begin with in beginning without presuppositions is pure, reflectionless and unstructured immediacy or indeterminateness, which, he says, is the 'ultimate, absolute truth of consciousness' (*WL*: Glockner, p. 71; Miller, p. 68). As I understand this, such an outcome of the work presupposed by presuppositionless science must indicate that the role of the *PhG* is to show why beginning with the structure of consciousness as a presupposition in philosophy leads to its elimination or self-cessation as a structure of knowing when its absolute and ultimate

truth is achieved. That is, the task of the *PhG* as introduction to science is the *critical* task of showing that when consciousness itself comes to demonstrate its absolute truth as a structure of knowing, when consciousness comes to an absolute self-grounding as structure of knowing, then consciousness, as a determinate and presupposed structure, comes to eliminate itself. (Thus the *PhG* might be understood not as the perversion of the Kantian critical project, but as its ultimate and radical completion. A completion which leads not to the affirmative absolutization of consciousness, but rather, through the consideration of consciousness' attempt at its own absolutization – in the *PhG* – to the immanent demonstration that consciousness cannot be taken as the foundational principle in philosophy.) The outcome of the *PhG* demonstrates that consciousness' attaining to its ultimate and absolute truth in absolute knowing yields 'indeterminateness' as the mediated indeterminateness of the structure of knowing presupposed in the *PhG*. So understood, the *PhG* is a presupposition for science because it comes to indicate indeterminateness as the outcome and truth of consciousness' project, the project defined in the Introduction to the *PhG* as consciousness' search for its truth. The *PhG* is not a presupposition in this science in the sense that the *PhG*'s outcome predetermines something in the science. The positive aspect of the outcome of the introduction is precisely the negative one of indicating how the science is *not* to begin – with a presupposed structure or principle of knowing – if it is to be pure and presuppositionless. The *PhG* is not a presupposition since it is, as Hegel says, a self-sublating mediation, in that the truth of consciousness as a presupposition about knowing shows itself to be its own elimination into indeterminateness or immediacy. That the positive character of the *PhG* as introduction lies precisely in its negative outcome, and further, that the beginning point of science, in virtue of this outcome, is both mediated (by the *PhG*) and immediate (because the *PhG* as mediation is radically self-sublating) is also in agreement with Hegel's remarks about the nature of determinate negation (*WL*: Glockner, p. 51; Miller, p. 54) and about beginning points generally. Concerning the latter he tells us: 'What philosophy begins with must be either *mediated* or *immediate*, and it is easy to show that it can be neither the one nor the other; thus either way of beginning is refuted.' '[T]here is nothing, nothing in heaven or in nature or mind or anywhere else which does not equally contain both immediacy and mediation, so that these two determinations reveal themselves to be *unseparated* and inseparable and the opposition between them to be a nullity' (*WL*: Glockner, pp. 69–71; Miller, pp. 67–8).

My contention that the *PhG* as the introduction to science and the deduction of its concept functions in a negative and critical – as opposed to a positive and affirmative – manner *vis-à-vis* consciousness is substan-

tiated by other remarks by Hegel in the *PhG* and the *WL*. In the Preface to the *PhG* Hegel notes the following:

The standpoint of consciousness which knows objects in their antithesis to itself, and itself in antithesis to them, is for Science the antithesis to its own standpoint. The situation in which consciousness knows itself to be at home is for Science one marked by the absence of Spirit. Conversely, the element of Science is for consciousness a remote beyond in which it no longer possesses itself. . . . When natural consciousness entrusts itself straightway to Science, it makes an attempt, induced by it knows not what, to walk on its head too, just this once; the compulsion to assume this unwonted posture and to go about in it is a violence it is expected to do to itself. . . . It is this coming-to-be of Science as such or knowledge that is described in the *Phenomenology* of Spirit. . . . This coming-to-be (considering the content and patterns it will display therein) will not be what is commonly understood by an initiation of the unscientific consciousness into Science: it will also be quite different from the 'foundation' of Science.

(*PhG*: Glockner, pp. 29–30; Miller, pp. 15–16)

And in the Introduction to the *PhG*, where Hegel posits consciousness as engaged in a search for the truth by means of a self-investigation of its modes of knowing ('shapes' of consciousness), he anticipates the outcome of this project in the following negative manner:

Natural consciousness will show itself to be only the Notion of knowledge, or in other words, not to be real knowledge. But since it directly takes itself to be real knowledge, this path has a negative significance for it, and what is in fact the realization of the Notion counts for it rather as the loss of its own self: for it does lose its truth on this path. The road can therefore be regarded as the pathway of doubt, or more precisely as the way of despair. . . . [T]his path is the conscious insight into the untruth of phenomenal knowledge.

(*PhG*: Glockner, pp. 71–2; Miller, pp. 49–50)

The idea that the *PhG* functions as introduction to science through being a thoroughgoing and radical critique of consciousness is also substantiated by several remarks of Hegel's in the opening sections of the *WL*. He tells us: 'pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness' (*WL*: Glockner, p. 45; Miller, p. 49); and 'the liberation from the opposition of consciousness which the science of logic must be able to presuppose lifts the determinations of thought above this trivial, incomplete standpoint and demands that they be considered not with any such

limitation and reference but as they are in their proper character, as logic, as pure reason' (WL: Glockner, p. 47; Miller, p. 51).

For Hegel, science – the attaining to an autonomous standpoint for thought – begins when the subject/object distinction of consciousness is no longer taken to be paradigmatic for thought. We have seen that this ultimate rejection – the 'liberation from the opposition of consciousness which the science of logic must be able to presuppose' – is the outcome of absolute knowing as the deduced concept. And we have seen that it is a radical rejection, for the overcoming of the opposition in absolute knowing does *not* yield some absolute consciousness or some super-purified transcendental ego. Rather, when consciousness comes to attain its absoluteness in absolute knowing – when it comes to an absolute self-grounding of itself through knowing its object as itself and itself as its object – the determinate difference between subject and object, the opposition of consciousness which is definitive of consciousness as a mode of knowing, is eliminated, leaving behind only an unanalysable, undifferentiated unity: pure indeterminateness. Further evidence that such an understanding of the role and aim of the *PhG* corresponds to or coincides with Hegel's own self-understanding of the work is to be found in the following remarks from the Introduction to the WL:

These views on the relation of subject and object to each other express the determinations which constitute the nature of our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness; but when these same prejudices are carried out into the sphere of reason as if the same relation obtained there, as if this relation were something true in its own self, then they are errors the refutation of which throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe is philosophy, or rather, as they bar the entrance to philosophy, must be discarded at its portals.

(WL: Glockner, p. 39; Miller, p. 45)

The task of the *PhG* as introduction is thus to transcend the 'limited standpoint' by refuting that 'prejudice' – that knowing *must* be, in some form or another, knowing as defined by the structure of consciousness – which 'bar[s] the entrance to philosophy' and consequently 'must be discarded at its portals'. It is my contention that the *PhG* fulfils this task in its being a consideration (by the phenomenological 'we', the observers of consciousness) of the attempt by consciousness to show that this 'relation of subject and object' *can* be 'carried out into the sphere of reason'. Consciousness in the *PhG* attempts to show that its structure *is* definitive of true knowing as such, that it is 'something true in its own self', and that it can thus be taken as the foundational principle or beginning point for philosophical science. But, according to Hegel, when consciousness comes to the point of grounding itself as absolute principle

for philosophical science, the knowing attained and consciousness itself as something determinate and presupposable are eliminated. Thus the *PhG* deduces the concept of science negatively by showing why it is that autonomous, radically pure and self-grounding science cannot begin with any such presupposed determinate structure or principle. The consideration of the attempt to absolutize consciousness in the *PhG* shows, contrary to the traditional interpretation of that work, that consciousness is not an absolute principle for Hegel. And it also suggests – in a manner unappreciated by those who today argue in favour of the notion that all thought is necessarily *limited* owing to its imbeddedness in a perspective defined by the structure of consciousness – that consciousness is not an absolute limit beyond which reason cannot extend. Thus, in general terms, the *PhG* argues both against the positive idea of consciousness as the absolute principle for reason and against the contemporary negative idea of consciousness as an absolute limiting condition for reason.

Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969); *Wissenschaft der Logik: Erster Band Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1927–30), Vol. 3. 'The Concept of Science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it' (Miller, p. 49; Glockner, p. 45).

2 Wim van Dooren, *Hegel-Studien*, no. 4, 1967; no. 7, 1972. J. N. Findlay, Foreword, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. xiii: 'Despite the sensitive work of Jean Hyppolite, we are far from having anything like a really full commentary on the *Phenomenology*.' Cf. Howard Kainz, *Hegel's Phenomenology* (University: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1976), who asserts that no 'true' or 'refutable' commentary is possible.

3 Otto Pöggeler, 'Die Komposition der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*', in *Materialien zu Hegels 'Phänomenologie des Geistes'*, ed. H. F. Fulda and D. Henrich (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), pp. 382, 333–4, 372. Originally published in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3 (Bonn, 1976), pp. 27ff.

4 Pöggeler, 'Zur Deutung der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*', in *Hegels Idee der Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Freiburg, 1973), pp. 171, 181. Originally in *Hegel-Studien*, no. 1, 1961.

5 See Pöggeler, 'Zur Deutung', pp. 188–9. Also, Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), p. 233, footnote; Malcolm Clark, *Logic and System* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 143–4; Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Berlin, 1857); and Theodor Haering, *Hegel, Sein Wollen und Sein Werk* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1938).

6 Representatives of the received view are legion. They include, for example, J. N. Findlay (*Hegel: A Re-Examination*); Jean Hyppolite (*Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*), Quentin Lauer (*A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*), Herbert Marcuse (*Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit*), Otto Pöggeler (*Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes*),

Stanley Rosen (*G. W. F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom*) and Charles Taylor (*Hegel*).

7 See Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

8 A somewhat dissenting voice is raised by Rüdiger Bubner in *Dialektik und Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 9–43. Bubner correctly perceives that the function of the *PhG* of 1807 was meant by Hegel to be critical (see pp. 39ff.). But he none the less holds the received view that the outcome of the *PhG* as critique is positive in that it establishes the determinate truth of knowing: consciousness discovers the essence of its truth as pure reflection (pp. 42–3).

9 On this point see especially Taylor, *Hegel*, pp. 136, 214.

10 For those who hold that the *PhG* fails as an argument, see, for example, Horst Henning Ottmann, *Das Scheitern einer Einleitung in Hegels Philosophie* (Munich, 1973), especially pp. 145, 191ff.

11 See, for example, Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 214.

12 For example Taylor, *ibid.*, pp. 226, 299.

13 Dieter Henrich, in his article 'Anfang und Methode der Logik', in *Hegel im Kontext* (Stuttgart, 1971), indicates that the notion that the *Science of Logic* begins in or with reflection does not coincide with Hegel's self-understanding and claims concerning this beginning. Whether or not Henrich feels that the beginning can be made in such a manner as Hegel indicates is unclear.

14 For Hegel's assertion that the *WL* begins without presuppositions, see Glockner, p. 73 and Miller, p. 70. That the *PhG* is presupposition for science: see Glockner, pp. 43–4, 60, 71 and Miller, pp. 48, 60, 68. For Hegel's assertion that neither the concept nor the method of science can be pre-determined from outside the science, see Glockner, pp. 36, 50–1 and Miller, pp. 43, 53.

15 Pöggeler explicitly notes the difficulties for interpretation raised by these remarks. See 'Zur Deutung', p. 244.

16 That Hegel regards absolute knowing and pure knowing to be one and the same: compare Glockner, pp. 43–4 and Miller, p. 48, with Glockner, p. 71 and Miller, p. 69. In the first passage the concept is referred to as the truth of consciousness, the result of the *PhG*, and is called *absolute knowing*, while in the second the concept is again referred to as the truth of consciousness and the result of the *PhG*, but here it is called *pure knowing*.

17 This last remark, taken in conjunction with Hegel's claim that that into which this knowing vanishes is 'unanalysable' (Glockner, p. 80; Miller, p. 75), also rules out an *implicit* structure functioning as a *telos* within the beginning point and discoverable by reflection.

18 For Hegel's denial that the beginning of the science can be made with the structure of the knowing self – the ego or self-consciousness – see Glockner, pp. 82f., Miller, pp. 76f.: 'when pure knowing is characterized as ego, it acts as a perpetual reminder of the subjective ego whose limitations should be forgotten, and it fosters the idea that the propositions and relations resulting from the further development of the ego are present and can already be found in ordinary consciousness – for in fact it is this of which they are asserted. This confusion, far from clarifying the problem of a beginning, only adds to the difficulties involved and tends completely to mislead: among the uninitiated it has given rise to the crudest misunderstandings.' And: 'the actual development of the science which starts from the ego [that is the *PhG*] shows that in that development the object has and retains the perennial character of an other for the ego, and that the ego which formed the starting-point is, therefore, still entangled in the world of appearance and is not the pure knowing which has in truth overcome the opposition of consciousness'.

Foundationalism, holism or Hegel?

David S. Stern

In recent years Hegel has enjoyed an unexpected rehabilitation and reappropriation. Readers have discovered Hegel to be a relentless combatant of the immediacy of the given and thus a powerful ally in the war against epistemological foundationalism.¹ Moreover, he has been recognized as a fecund source of the holistic conception of the contextual embeddedness of every form and manifestation of reason – including scientific theory, morality and legal institutions – presumed to follow from the collapse of foundationalism.²

A telling feature of this reading of Hegel is the way in which Hegel's notion of 'absolute knowledge' is rejected out of hand as a symptom of Hegel's own failure to liberate himself fully from foundationalism and embrace a consequent holism.³ I want to propose an alternative reading of Hegel's critique, in order to redeem a more radical insight into the nature and source of the foundationalist/holist dilemma than most discussions allow. Hegel's argument, as I shall present it, suggests that the opposition of foundationalism and holism constitutes a spurious dilemma, in so far as both rest on an assumption that all knowing is characterized by reference to a given. Hegel's critique, thus, may be directed not merely at foundationalism's reliance on the 'myth of the given', but also against its presumed successor, whether a theoretical or practical holism, adopted in the wake of the myth's collapse. In Hegel's view, the critique of epistemology compels the rejection of both foundationalism and holism, since the arguments directed against the former undermine holism as well.

The holistic alternative, which amounts to a truncated Hegelianism that jettisons Hegel's 'absolute knowledge', fails to appreciate the real power of Hegel's critique of what he calls representational knowing. Hegel's argument is that the very structure of representational knowing cannot ultimately be upheld, so that neither of the purported alternatives stands.

In the final part of this paper I shall briefly explicate what I take to be a remarkable irony: that the notorious concluding section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, together with the *Science of Logic*, so often rejected out of hand even by readers sympathetic to Hegel, is the consequence of Hegel's critique of both foundationalism and holism, and thus is addressed to issues of concern to contemporary philosophy.

I

The epistemological reflections in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* make abundantly clear that Hegel is acutely sensitive to the problem of justification in the epistemological project. Kant's famous transcendental turn, of course, was motivated by the desire to avoid the difficulties he perceived in the traditional, objectivist approach. If knowledge must conform to its object, in order to grasp the object as it is in truth, then knowing functions with an objectivist paradigm in so far as the object is accorded primacy or priority. True knowledge is supposed to predicate something true of the object, so that *S* really is *P*. But how is the purported truth of such knowledge to be justified? How can we *know* that what we claim to know of the object is true? We cannot rest satisfied, in this regard, with any appeals to intuition, or acquaintance, or to assurances that we need only examine the subject matter etc., for these would either beg the question or merely displace the question of justification of what we claim to know.

This dilemma of justification led Kant to invert the order by giving primacy to justification and to the modes of knowing in terms of which justification is formulated. In a famous passage Kant expressed the matter succinctly:

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all our attempts to establish *a priori* something about objects . . . have failed. We must therefore try whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.⁴

Kant accordingly turned away from the given objects of knowledge and sought to discover the privileged transcendental conditions establishing the structure of knowledge, since these would determine any object of knowledge.

Hegel recognized, however, that even on Kant's account we are faced with a dilemma: because the critique of knowing is itself knowing, the truth of the knowledge claimed at the transcendental level requires justification. Otherwise we would have no means of establishing how we

know that a certain principle is a necessary condition of experience.⁵ If the demand for justification is ignored, then we have a sort of transcendental dogmatism that gives out what Hegel calls 'bare assurances' in place of the needed demonstration of its truth. On the other hand, if transcendental theory accepts the demand for a reflexive demonstration of its own truth, then the justification of the truth of the purported knowledge of the conditions of knowledge will have to be raised at a higher level. Yet this too would involve a knowing of knowing, and would thus require justification. Conceived in this way, transcendental theory seems subject to a regress.⁶

The effort to establish securely the conditions of knowledge by means of a critique of knowledge is, Hegel suggests, akin to the desire to learn to swim before entering the water, no doubt due to the inherent flux of the element in which the activity must be pursued and the consequent apprehension about our ability to return to firm ground once we have entered in.⁷ Having no genuine alternative, Hegel urges that we resolutely enter in, or rather that we find ourselves already in the midst. Accordingly, Hegel's methodological alternative is thoroughly contextualist; in contrast to any effort to define in some formal, *a priori*, way what justification of a knowledge claim would be (and Kant's is only one possible form that such an effort might take), his account in the *Phenomenology* begins with what he calls 'knowing as it appears', in which any particular knowledge claim is understood against the larger background of a set of beliefs, including beliefs concerning the acquisition of new beliefs, the conditions of credibility and, in general, assumptions about what counts as knowledge.⁸ Standards of justification are thus part of and essential to the larger epistemic situation in which a knowledge claim is made, and not specified *a priori* in a manner appropriate to all contexts.⁹

Now it is precisely here that the foundationalists and holists join issue. The former maintain two essential theses: first, that in order to avoid a regress we must posit foundational beliefs that are intrinsically credible or directly evident, such that they can serve as the ultimate terminus of any effort at justification. Second, such directly evident beliefs are held to be the points at which the larger structure of belief is tied to the world.¹⁰

Hegel's proposal is not to enter the fray directly by arguing on behalf of one alternative or the other; and we should not be led to think that merely because he begins with knowing as it appears, that is with a contextualized notion of justification, he seeks to resolve the issue by fiat. Rather, Hegel's proposal is that we take as an object for description modes of knowing that attempt to justify knowledge claims by appeal to some privileged foundational principle. The typology that Hegel provides in the first section of the *Phenomenology* presents us thus with various forms of foundationalism, all of which presume that justification must

appeal to some intrinsically credible standard by means of which conformity with 'the facts' is to be secured.

Hegel's analyses show that the efforts to uphold such an orientation all exhibit one fatal difficulty: they are unable to defend the truth of the knowledge they claim without recurring to explanatory principles that ought to be unavailable if strict consistency were maintained. For example, the initial, most primitive form described in the *Phenomenology* is what Hegel calls sense-certainty. Sense-certainty is an epistemic paradigm that holds that the terminus of justification is a direct and immediate sensory grasp of its object, which it takes to be a sensed-particular. In Hegel's terms, the 'standard' is what counts as knowledge under this paradigm, and all justified knowledge must be either such direct apprehension of the sensed object or inferred from such direct contact, for this alone, so the assumption goes, is what establishes the demonstrable conformity of our purported knowledge with the world.

In its efforts to say what it knows, and thereby to establish the truth of its knowledge, sense-certainty must make its own standard of truth an explicit object of knowledge, for otherwise the comparison of the knowledge claim with the criterion of truth would be impossible. A twofold difficulty is thereby engendered, however: first, in so far as the presumably intrinsically credible beliefs which afford us access to the world have become objects of knowledge, they seem no longer to enjoy the incorrigibility that they are presumed to have. Differently expressed, we are not entitled simply to assume the truth of this knowledge. Second, the new, reflexive knowledge – the explicit consideration of what counts as truth under this paradigm, in order to establish the truth of what we claim to know – involves a different mode of knowing from that allowed by the paradigm. The knowledge of the standard is not a mode of sense-certainty at all; but the paradigm defines knowledge as, or justifies it in terms of, the purportedly direct and incorrigible apprehension characteristic of sense-certainty.

Nor is this an accidental feature of the case. Rather, Hegel's analysis shows that this result is the consequence of any effort to establish the truth of knowledge on a foundationalist basis. Knowing something as true – in the example from Hegel's opening chapter, knowing a particular as a particular – undercuts both the ability of the foundational principles to tie our knowledge to the world and the status of such principles as standards of justification. Foundationalist paradigms thus require for their coherence a mode or kind of knowledge specifically disallowed by the paradigm itself.

II

The upshot of Hegel's analyses, then, is that the foundationalist model is self-defeating, and the enlistment of Hegel's aid by the opponents of foundationalism is not without justification. Hegel's new partisans have seen in him more than a critical ally, however; Hegel's theory has been thought to provide particular insight into the consequences of the rejection of foundationalism. The sections of the *Phenomenology* following the first part's undermining of foundationalism seem to offer a concerted assault on various efforts to ground objectivity in, for example, a world-less transcendental subject, or a disembodied and ahistorical reason, or, we may extrapolate, a purified formal language, or a theory of reference. Yet the characterization of Hegel's argument is hardly radical enough if we suppose that he merely proposes what has been called a theoretical holism, which begins with the anti-foundationalist thesis that there is no unsullied access to pure data that can verify, justify or ground theoretical claims, since the very data themselves are interpreted or theory-laden. For theoretical holism, then, the meaning of a particular proposition is a function of its role in the larger context of accepted propositions constitutive of theory, and not a consequence of any direct relation with experience. The holism involved here can be characterized as theoretical precisely because of the assumption that the relevant whole is at least implicitly a theory, i.e. a set of explicit propositions or hypotheses, or common-sense attitudes that could in principle be formulated as a 'belief system'.¹¹ Every constitutive element of the background is presumed to be susceptible to expression as a theoretical hypothesis or proposition, so that nothing can in principle be exempt from such theoretical formulation. Moreover, such a view is theoretical in its focus in so far as it conceives of the commensuration of disparate systems of belief in terms of a theory that can maximize agreement about what is to be accepted as true and false in order to translate beliefs from one system into another.

Hegel's *Phenomenology*, by contrast, is considered to be the *locus classicus* for a much more far-reaching practical holism. With the introduction of his notion of Spirit Hegel undertakes to describe the extent to which human practices are irreducible to theoretical constructs. The reasons for this are indicated by Hegel's analyses of what he calls *Sittlichkeit*. This word, for which there is no equivalent in English, is based on the German root *Sitte*, which has a notable range of meanings including habit, custom, manners, and morals. Hegel's translators have usually rendered *Sittlichkeit* as ethical life or world, but such a reading confines the phenomenon Hegel seeks to elucidate to the explicitly moral or ethical domain. In so far as we associate ethics with the realm of voluntary or freely chosen actions on the basis of more or less explicitly stated principles, such a constriction of the sense of *Sitten* or *Sittlichkeit* utterly

misses the force of Hegel's analysis. *Sittlichkeit* constitutes, on Hegel's analysis, the crucial, intermediate stratum of human existence between the strictly rational and voluntary level of moral self-determination and self-conscious theorizing on the one hand, and the pre-rational and pre-voluntary level of habits, customs, tradition etc, on the other.

The habits, customs, traditions etc. that constitute *Sittlichkeit* inform human practices of all sorts; those interested in extracting a practical holism from Hegel suppose that this background cannot be treated as a presupposition or set of presuppositions which might be retrieved by means of a process of reflection that would make them into explicit cognitive beliefs, constituting a theory. Habits, customs and mores, which Hegel argues provide the content of human practices, are not beliefs in waiting; rather they constitute a precondition of all practices, whether these be our dealings with the objects and persons in our everyday lives or the far more abstract theoretical efforts to interpret those objects and our world, and this precondition is not something which lies at our disposal.

On this account, then, Hegel's signal contribution is supposed to be his demonstration of the repeated failure of efforts to establish an incorrigible standpoint independent of the holistic context of theory and practice represented by *Sittlichkeit*. Or rather, his argument allows us to understand why any such project is doomed to failure. Simply put, the analysis is thought to show how the practices and institutions of different historical epochs constitute the pre-cognitive background of all understanding and thus frame the context in which both ordinary understanding proceeds and the standards by which theoretical claims are measured.

As we all know, however, Hegel claims in the *Phenomenology* to attain what he calls 'absolute knowing'. This claim has usually been treated with deep-seated suspicion, for understandable reasons. The position outlined thus far would suggest that Hegel's own arguments against foundationalism, and his elucidation of a practical holism, undermine his own claim to an absolute standpoint. Differently put, Hegel's own arguments are taken to show that the final stage of the *Phenomenology* can be only another 'shape of consciousness' characterized by the very contextual embeddedness that precludes any claim to absolute knowledge. Have we any choice but to agree with this verdict? Must we simply conclude that Hegel's most famous thesis fails to appreciate the force of his own arguments against epistemology, and reintroduces a discredited claim to an incorrigible standpoint of knowledge?

III

Hegel gives us reason to believe that the alternatives of a contextually embedded reason and an absolute knowing that is nothing other than foundationalism *recidivus* are not exhaustive. The key to recognizing this lies in the heretofore unexamined assumption that undergirds the inference from the collapse of foundationalism to holism: that all knowing without exception makes reference to a given, even or especially the given historical and cultural context said to determine understanding. What has not been adequately appreciated is the way in which Hegel's *Phenomenology* contests the cogency of this assumption. Hegel turns the tables on his critics in a way that gives us a new understanding of the issues by arguing that the holists' critique of foundationalism is blind to the more far-reaching implications: the critique of foundationalism pursued to its ultimate limit leads to the collapse of the very structure of representational or referential knowing assumed by the foundationalists and holists alike. If we can make out this claim, then Hegel will be able to show that we are not condemned either to a historicized holism or a recidivous appeal to a discredited foundationalism.

The first step in undermining the supposition that holism follows from the critique of foundationalism is the recognition that the very arguments directed against foundationalism apply to holism as well. We have seen that Hegel's arguments show that foundationalism is strapped with a fatal difficulty, namely, that it cannot justify what it claims to know without invoking a form of knowledge which its own paradigm ought to disallow. The same is true of the holists' thesis – invoked against Hegel's notion of an absolute knowing – that all knowing is grounded in historical practices that not only make knowing possible, but also normatively determine what counts as knowledge. The difficulty here is obvious: the thesis, if it is ever enunciated as such, about all knowing is itself not an instance of the historical embeddedness that is supposed to be a universal characteristic that remains unchanged throughout the historical variations, but rather offers a supra-historical and purportedly incorrigible claim about the character of knowing as such. It can either claim no authority for such a thesis, and thus cannot justify itself, or if it tacitly does so, it violates its own strictures about the character of knowing.

Second, in addition to the difficulty concerning justification, the very possibility of the holistic thesis is itself problematic. Holism contends that the collapse of foundationalism yields the conclusion that there is no escape from the all-embracing context governing any knowledge, truth claims, justification etc. Holism characteristically abjures any effort to deduce the transcendental conditions governing intelligibility, or to specify the incorrigible means by which experience hooks on to the world,

adopting instead a pragmatic and fallibilist stance that attributes no privileged status to any terms, concepts or beliefs.¹²

Despite the modesty of such claims, the difficulty is clear: if all intelligibility is grounded in what Gadamer has called 'prejudices' – given assumptions, criteria of selection, paradigms of evidence etc. – how is the thesis of holism possible?¹³ In forwarding a claim about the way in which all knowing functions, holism presupposes that some knowledge of the framework governing knowledge is available. To be sure, there is no need to assert that any complete or perfect knowledge of all the features of a conceptual framework is presupposed. But what must somehow be known is that the framework functions as the – acknowledgedly contingent and limited – condition of discourse.

Yet we must ask even of this formal knowledge how it should be possible. If holism is consistent, then its own knowledge ought to be determined by the scheme or framework in which the holist's own discourse occurs. The holist's thesis thus is a case in which the framework must be known in terms of itself. If indeed the framework underlies all intelligibility, how is it possible to know it in its *determining* function as the ground of understanding, when all knowing should already be determined by it? The very nature of the holistic thesis, assigning as it does a ground or source of intelligibility given prior to all knowing, precludes the possibility of understanding how that thesis is possible.¹⁴

Third, we must consider the assumption, definitive of what Hegel calls the standpoint of 'consciousness' or representational knowing, that all knowing must have reference to some given. The relevance and significance of this issue should be clear if we consider that the holists' rejection of absolute knowing presupposes that it too is characterized by the representational structure of reference to a given. Even Hegel's new partisans assume that absolute knowledge, as a mode of knowing, must be embedded in a matrix of practices which predetermines its character and its standards of truth. Absolute knowledge can only be what Hegel calls another 'shape of consciousness', so that there is no justification for the fundamental claim of the *Phenomenology* that the structure of representational knowing has been overcome.

One might object at this point, however, that only a crucial equivocation in the sense of the term 'given' can permit the consideration of both foundationalism and holism under the heading of representational knowing. For there seems to be a clear difference between the foundationalist sense of the given as an item or object of knowledge, and the holist assumption of a context determining knowledge and action. Despite this *prima facie* difference, however, I think a defence of the Hegelian supposition that both are identical in one fundamental respect can be made out.

The foundationalist sense of the given is that of a directly evident belief

that secures our connection to the world, while the holist usage refers to the background practices and institutions determining any particular knowledge claim or action. The unifying element in these otherwise disparate applications is that both the foundational epistemological datum and the holistic background of praxis function as presuppositions. In both cases what is taken as the given is held to be something which is not a construct of the knowledge claim or the praxis as such, but is rather independent of and prior to knowing and/or action. Thus in both cases the given is held to lie outside of the undertaking itself, while none the less serving as the standard in terms of which evaluation and justification can occur.¹⁵

Even if we take the legitimacy of the identification of the two senses of the given to be established, however, it must be admitted that Hegel's argument against the thesis concerning reference to a given has occasioned much misunderstanding and incomprehension, often being taken as a relapse into pre-Kantian metaphysics. Our understanding might perhaps be advanced by comparing it to an analogous development in contemporary philosophy that arose out of the analytic appropriation of Kant's philosophy, especially in Strawson's *Bounds of Sense*.¹⁶ Strawson accepts the Kantian starting point, the dichotomy of intuitions and concepts, that constitutes the very thesis Hegel undercuts. His argument is designed to show that intuitions, or what Strawson calls particular items, must be recognized or conceptualized if we are to have experience.¹⁷ In his important discussion of Strawson's argument, Rorty has pointed out that this cannot mean that the item recognized is merely classified or subsumed under a concept, for like Kant, Strawson identifies the recognitional component with judgment, so that this sort of recognition would involve judgments in which a man, for example, is recognized to be Jones. Rather, the attempt is supposed to begin with unconceptualized intuitions, and this requires that we be able to recognize or 'be aware of something – the intuition recognized – prior to being aware of it under any description, that we cognize it before we recognize it'.¹⁸ As Rorty recognizes, it is just this both Kant and Strawson are at pains to deny. His contention is that the conclusion that must be drawn from this dilemma is that the starting point, the dichotomy between intuition and concept, must be *aufgehoben*, to use the Hegelian term for what is, I wish to suggest, a decidedly Hegelian point. Drawing on the various attacks on the notion of the given forwarded in recent years, Rorty argues that the Kantian unsynthesized intuition, or Strawsonian particular item, is simply a fictional premise invoked in order to get the argument started, but which is discovered to have no function once the argument has gone through.¹⁹ Rorty expresses this felicitously:

A Kantian unsynthesized intuition can exert no influence on how it is

to be synthesized. . . . Insofar as a Kantian intuition is effable, it is just a perceptual judgment, and thus not merely 'intuitive'. Insofar as it is ineffable, it is incapable of having an explanatory function.²⁰

This is precisely one of the fundamental tenets of Kantian transcendental philosophy Hegel contends cannot be upheld, and which he explicitly rejects as relevant to his categorial theory developed in the *Logic*. Yet in simply noting that the appeal to intuitions or the given is superfluous because they have no 'explanatory function', we have not yet exhausted the implications of this fundamental revision. Again Rorty's analysis, this time drawing on Donald Davidson's criticisms of the scheme/content distinction, may help us to understand what is at issue.²¹

The usual picture depends on a contrast between conceptual activity and the passive, neutral domain of material given for conceptualization, the latter receiving its form or structure from the former. But as we have already seen, the notion of a mere given in need of being structured has no explanatory or normative function; and it is apparent that the conceptual scheme and conceptualizable content are correlative terms. Rorty infers from the fact that intuitions drop out that the commonplace assumption of this dichotomy must also fall:

the suggestion that our concepts shape neutral material no longer makes sense once there is nothing to serve as this material. The physical stimuli themselves are not a useful substitute, for the contrast between the 'positis' which the inventive mind constructs to predict and control stimuli, and the stimuli themselves, can be no more than a contrast between the effable world and its ineffable cause.²²

The insight that intuitions have no explanatory function renders superfluous the epistemological project of demonstrating the objectivity of concepts or our conceptual scheme by showing that these concepts apply necessarily to the foundational intuitions of the given that are supposed to assure the connection of our knowledge to the world. The world in itself that is supposed to guide or determine our knowledge by functioning as the standard of truth is only an empty place holder arrived at by abstracting from all of our representations of the world.²³ Though these criticisms are directed at foundationalism, they can as well be directed towards holism's assumption that all knowing makes reference to some given.

Whether Davidson and others have intended such an extension is doubtful, for they have considered the only consequent conclusion to be drawn from the collapse of the notion of a conceptual scheme to be the abandonment of traditional epistemological and ontological concerns in favour of either a quasi-empirical account of how language works (but

not how it 'hooks on to the world'), a realism that, purged of its epistemological elements, is only a thesis about theoretical terms in science, or a cultural 'holism'.

The conclusion Hegel draws from the critique of epistemology is, however, not at all that which recent analytic critics of the scheme/content dichotomy have drawn. Despite the similarity of their analyses to Hegel's criticism of the Kantian dualism, Hegel's whole philosophical project is committed to the belief that quite different conclusions follow from the dissolution of the Kantian dichotomy of intuition and thought, or more generally, of the representational structure of knowing. Far from accepting the radically anti-Kantian move urged by some contemporary thinkers, Hegel is committed to the necessity and possibility of a novel defence of objectivity.

IV

Hegel tells us that the task of the *Phenomenology* consists in overcoming the opposition of consciousness, that is the very difference between the categories of thought and the object-domain to which they apply. In order to understand this, we need to turn to the culmination of the *Phenomenology*. The result of the analysis of consciousness is that its most basic presupposition – the representational structure characterized by reference to a given – cannot be upheld as absolute. The culmination of the phenomenological dialectic is the recognition by Spirit that it is not a determinate entity – a subject – distinguished from something else – an object to which it is related. When, at the end of the dialectic, knowing makes itself its own object, subject and object are distinguished and yet identical. This is absolute knowing as Hegel describes it: thought thinks itself, and in so doing is no longer 'burdened with something alien, with what is only for it, and some sort of other' (9:62, 1–2/56–7). No discrepancy between certainty and truth remains because that which knows, that which is known, and that in virtue of which the known is known are identical.

The significance of this is not that all reality is encompassed by an all-knowing mind, as some have thought, nor is it that all of reality is seen to be somehow immanent in an infinite subject-substance called absolute spirit. Rather, the point is simply that when knowing comes to thematize its own presupposed structure, in an effort to establish its absolute and unimpeachable validity, the very structure definitive of representational thought – the fixed distinction between subject and object, or between knowing and that which is known – collapses. Thus absolute knowing must be understood in terms of Hegel's critique of epistemology. Because the investigation of knowing is itself a mode of knowing, the articulation

of the transcendental conditions of knowledge which itself requires justification must 'fall within philosophy', or within thought itself.²⁴

Hegel's basic claim, which he thinks he has demonstrated in the *Phenomenology*, is that only when the representational structure of knowing is abolished can such an investigation of thought by thought itself be undertaken. It is, I suggest, the standpoint from which this is possible that has been introduced by the anti-foundationalist critique of the subject-object model within the *Phenomenology*. It is in this sense that we should understand Hegel's remark in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* that the goal of the dialectic must be a point at which thought is no longer burdened by the difference in levels, or by an order to which it must conform or apply if it is to possess any truth: it then no longer needs to go beyond itself, but can instead remain within the immanence of thought (9:57, 18–21/51 and 62, 1–5/56–7).²⁵ The absoluteness of thought is that it is not dependent on or conditioned by anything other than itself. Because of this, thought can and must investigate itself.

Hegel need not be thought to hold the absurd thesis that the autonomy of thought implies that there are no conditions whatsoever determining thought. On the contrary, Hegel's writings provide us with multi-faceted investigations of the various ways in which thought is conditioned by such things as nature (in his account of the psychological development of consciousness and the capacity for thought) and cultural history. To take only the most obvious example, Hegel recognizes that all thought is articulated in language, and moreover, that languages are constitutive of larger forms of life. But he is not led by this observation to conclude what most in this century have concluded: that language is therefore to be considered as the foundation of thought determining both the content and the validity of thought itself.

The admission of such a foundation of thought would, of course, only reintroduce the dilemmas of foundationalism and holism already discussed. The collapse of representational knowing's assumption of a foundation given prior to all knowledge leads Hegel to conclude that though there are indeed many conditions of thought and thus of knowledge, none of these can be taken to function as a normative determination of knowledge as such.

It is in his *Science of Logic* that the critique of epistemology bears fruit. Hegel speaks of the work as a thinking of thinking that considers the 'determinations of thought in themselves', and not, as in Kantian epistemology, in their relation to something external; that is, it makes no reference to an ontic domain to which the categories might apply.²⁶ The immanence of thought is nothing other than the consequence of the critique of epistemology carried to its conclusion, and not a restatement of the very sort of idealism which readers have often thought Hegel is proposing. That is, talk of the 'immanence of thought', though these are

my own words and not Hegel's, should not be taken as a metaphysical thesis, according to which there is nothing which is outside of thought or mind, nothing which it cannot perfectly know. The notion should also not be confused with the 'theory of ideas', in which ideas are in the mind in the way that things can be in a container, so that the question becomes how the sphere of immanence is transcended. The much-disputed claim about the absoluteness of knowing or thinking, understood in terms of the immanence of thought, is instead to be taken as the comparatively modest thesis that the truth of categorial claims must be explained in terms of thought alone. The crucial point is in reality quite simple: only within thought itself can the truth of thought be justified, and not by appeal to anything other than thought.

This defines, I think, the project of that little-read work of Hegel's, the *Science of Logic*, whose undertaking is surprisingly relevant to the issues under discussion here. Though I cannot here provide even a sketch of the work, I wish to conclude with an indication of how the *Logic's* is beginning reflects the desiderata identified thus far. Rather than treating any of the conditions of thought as the normative foundation of knowledge, Hegel begins with 'indeterminacy'. The merit of such a beginning is that it need not presuppose any given determinations whatsoever, especially the presupposition of a conceptual structure that normatively determines what counts as knowledge. Indeterminacy has the advantage of not being a ground that functions as the source of all further categorial determinations, but which is not itself susceptible to explanation within the elaboration of the categories itself.

Beginning not with some primitive determination that is presupposed, Hegel's theory of categories takes its start with pure indeterminacy, for only if such a beginning is possible can there be a genuine alternative to the aporias of foundationalism and holism. We may perhaps remain dubious of the success of Hegel's undertaking in the *Science of Logic*, but we ought not to remain unaware of its audacious effort to address in novel terms the very issues that are of so much importance in contemporary philosophy.²⁷

Notes

1 See Charles Taylor, 'The Opening Arguments of the *Phenomenology*', in Alasdair MacIntyre, ed., *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 151–88.

2 The most influential reading of this sort is Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). For reflections of this reading, see Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Richard Rorty, 'The Contingency of Community', in *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), and the

common assumption that the communitarian critics of Rawlsian Kantianism, like Michael Sandel, are developing a Hegelian alternative.

3 Perhaps the classic example of this sort of reading is Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1985).

4 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Raymund Schmidt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1976), B xvi.

5 Hegel, *Theorie Werkausgabe*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), vol. 8, *Enzyklopaedie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I*, sec. 10.

6 For a good account of this dilemma with special reference to Hegel's philosophical project, see Robert B. Pippin, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Criticism', *Man and World* 8, No. 3 (August, 1975), 296–314, esp. 298–300 [reprinted above, pp. 39–56. R.S.].

7 Hegel, *Theorie Werkausgabe*, Vol. 20, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie III*, 334; *Lectures on the History of Philosophy III*, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983), 428. So far as I know, the connection of this point with Neurath's metaphor (so favoured by Quine), that our situation is like that of sailors on a boat at sea, has not been explored.

8 For statements of the notion of 'knowing as it appears', see G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 9, ed. by the Rheinisch Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1968–), 55 and 58. Henceforth, all citations to the *Phenomenology* will be given in the following form. The first reference will be to the volume, page and line number(s) of the *Gesammelte Werke*; the second reference, separated by a slash from the former, will be to A. V. Miller's translation, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Thus the citation here would be given as 9:55. 32/49 and 9:58. 33/53. All translations are my own.

9 For a good discussion of the role of what he calls 'epistemic beliefs', see Michael Williams, 'Coherence, Justification, and Truth', *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (December 1980), 243–72.

10 For a discussion of the recent literature by Michael Dummett, John Pollock, and Anthony Quinton, as well as the older writings of Ayer, Schlick, and Lewis, see Williams, 'Coherence, Justification, and Truth'.

11 I take the distinction between theoretical and practical holism from Hubert Dreyfus, 'Holism and Hermeneutics', *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (September 1980), 3–23.

12 The transcendental pragmatics of Apel and Habermas represent an exception to this generalization. See Karl-Otto Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973) and Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

13 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 2nd edn (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1965), 250–75; English tr. *Truth and Method* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1985), 235–58.

14 For a similar argument, see Richard D. Winfield, 'Hegel versus the New Orthodoxy', in William Desmond, ed., *Hegel and His Critics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 219–35.

15 Thus in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel analyses the structure of what he calls consciousness or representational knowing in terms of just such a reference to a presupposed given. See 9: 58, 23–35/52. What has too often gone unnoticed, however, is that this structure is held by Hegel to apply equally

to the forms of epistemological consciousness in the opening chapters and the analyses of the pragmatic and institutional contexts of action in the later chapters.

16 Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966). I realize that there are differences between Strawson's reconstruction and Kant's own position. For example, for Strawson intuitions are assumed to be intuitions of substantial objects, while for Kant such objects are only possible as conceptualized. Clearly this has tremendous implications for the interpretation of the task of Kant's philosophy, and suggests that Strawson has perhaps assumed what must be demonstrated. None the less, these differences can be ignored, for I am interested only in the more general thesis that the dualism of intuition and concept must be taken as the bedrock of any account of objectivity.

17 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 100, for example.

18 Richard Rorty, 'Strawson's Objectivity Argument', *Review of Metaphysics* 24, No. 2 (1970), 215–16.

19 See chapter IV of Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), for a more extended analysis of the sources of the attack on the notion of the given in Sellars and Quine. Rorty presents theses as 'radical ways of criticizing' what he expressly calls 'the Kantian foundations of analytic philosophy' (170).

20 Rorty, 'The World Well Lost', *Journal of Philosophy* 59, No. 19 (1972), 650. In suggesting that this is an Hegelian argument, I do not mean to countenance the understanding that Rorty himself has of Hegel, to whom he refers in this essay. For he thinks of Hegel primarily as an historicist philosopher of culture, and is apparently oblivious to Hegel's contributions to the sorts of issues under discussion here.

21 Donald Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 47 (1973–4), 5–20.

22 Rorty, 'The World Well Lost', 650–1.

23 Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 138–9. For Hegel's criticisms of the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself as vacuous, see 9: 102, 8–23/102–3; 21: 108/109, English tr. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, tr. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 120–1.

24 Hegel, *Theorie Werkausgabe*, Vol. 8, *Enzyklopaedie* I, sec. 10.

25 I take this to be the point of Hegel's talk of the 'element' and 'ether' of thought to which ordinary thinking must be raised if philosophy, in the technical sense, is to be done. See 9: 22, 21–4/14, and *Enzyklopaedie* I, sec. 12, for example.

26 *Enzyklopaedie* I, sec. 19.

27 Earlier versions of this paper were read to the 1987 Mid-South Philosophy Conference at Memphis State University and the Philosophy Colloquium, New School for Social Research. I should like to thank Daniel Conway, Henry Allison and Robert Pippin for many helpful criticisms and suggestions.

'Sense-certainty' and universality: Hegel's entrance into the *Phenomenology*

Martin J. De Nys

Hegel's arguments in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* play an important role in that work as a whole, a role that has been subjected to much critical scrutiny. For Hegel, phenomenology is the 'Science of the Experience of Consciousness',¹ and more particularly a scientific exposition of that process through which consciousness, from within its own experience, progressively comprehends the concrete determinateness of its object, and of itself in relation to the object. Consciousness achieves this comprehension through a series of interrelated revisions of that 'concept'² which it produces from its experience of the object, and which it takes to comprehend its object as experienced. This process of such revisions is the 'dialectic' of consciousness' experience;³ the task of phenomenology is to observe this dialectic, and to show the necessary interrelations of its various phases. Each such revision, Hegel claims, results in a more concrete comprehension of the object on the part of consciousness, and a more concrete comprehension on the part of the consciousness of itself, as the intentional correlate of the object.

But this claim rests on the premise that the object of consciousness is something whose determinate actuality is accessible to consciousness through the concepts which consciousness produces from its experience of the object; that the object is, in this sense, thoroughly 'for consciousness'.⁴ If consciousness' object were something simply independent of consciousness, such that its actuality were available to consciousness not through concepts of the object which consciousness itself produces, but rather through consciousness' simply passively receiving the presentations of the object prior to any conceptualization, then Hegel's phenomenological project would fail from the start. Because then consciousness' most concrete access to its object would take place not through successive revisions of those concepts which it proposes as comprehending the

object, but through a setting aside of those standards, in favour of a passive, intuitive relation to the object.⁵

The role of the arguments in the opening chapter of the *Phenomenology*, which examines consciousness as 'sense-certainty', is to show that the object of consciousness is not something whose concrete actuality is available to the pre-conceptual consciousness which passively and intuitively receives the presentations of its object. Hegel's first arguments try to show this by trying to show that the true object of consciousness is not the simple and immediate sense particular, available only through intuition, but something more complex which presents itself as an object whose identity is to be known through a concept.

But critics, aware of the claim Hegel makes through these arguments, have attacked this very entrance into the phenomenological project. It has been argued that Hegel can enter into a phenomenology of the dialectical experience of consciousness only because he uncritically assumes from the beginning an indefensible posture that vitiates the distinction between thought and being, which posture is seen in his opening arguments about sense particulars and language.

This attack has been levelled at Hegel in the nineteenth century by Feuerbach, and in our own day by Karl Löwith. In this essay, I shall argue that their attack is misconceived, as involving an insufficiently precise understanding of the arguments in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology* concerning sense particulars and linguistic meaning, and especially of the notion of universality developed in that chapter. To do this, I will first summarize the arguments which Feuerbach and Löwith direct against Hegel on the point at issue here. Then I shall expose the arguments which Hegel himself develops in the opening chapter of the *Phenomenology*. Finally, through an appraisal of the notion of universality operative in that chapter, I will try to show that Hegel is not guilty in the arguments of this chapter of the assumption which Feuerbach and Löwith charge. Hegel does not uncritically collapse the distinction of thought and being in this chapter. Rather, he attempts to formulate this distinction in a way unavailable to any easily held naturalism.

I Criticisms of Hegel's opening arguments

Feuerbach and Löwith recognize that, from the start of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel must show that the object is somehow '... in itself ... only for consciousness',⁶ something determinable through consciousness' own determinations. But according to them Hegel can show that the object enjoys this relationship to consciousness, given the case of the sensed particular, only by holding that consciousness' object is in fact the universal, embodied in linguistic meaning, rather than the actual particu-

lar given in sensation. This involves his 'reformulating the difference between thought and being as the difference between knowing and the known'.⁷ This reformulation of this difference is something which Hegel in the *Phenomenology* uncritically and illegitimately assumes from the first.

Feuerbach opens his critique of Hegel by examining Hegel's understanding of the sensible particular as characterized by 'simple immediacy'.⁸ Hegel holds that consciousness, in its first attitude towards its object, takes that object to be sheerly immediate. But Hegel's way of treating 'immediacy' is objectionable. There is no doubt that the sensible particular is 'immediate' in the sense that its reality is not mediated by thought, that it can be described as something which simply stands over against thought, and is available to the subject through receptive sensation. But Hegel does not understand the 'immediacy' of the sensible particular in a rich sense, as indicating the integrity and independence of that particular as an object of consciousness. Hegel takes immediacy, as a characteristic of the particular, to be exclusively the opposite of mediateness, that which characterizes the universal concept. The universal is mediated; it refers beyond itself to many items. The particular is 'immediate'; it is exhaustively defined as that which is merely the other than the universal. In so far as Hegel holds that immediacy in this sense is the sole characteristic of the particular, then from the beginning the particular has for Hegel only this feature, that it is not universal, that it is itself only something opposed to the universal. The sensible particular, when characterized as exclusively immediate, is no longer conceived of as this tree, this man, a singular and rich source of multiple determinations, intuitively accessible. It is rather conceived of only as an immediate or particular something, a something which stands in a single opposition to the universal.⁹ This is to characterize the particular as a 'moment of thought',¹⁰ which is defined only through its opposition to universality. Already, the rich presence of the sensible particular has been left behind by a definition which defines the particular only through its opposition to something else, to the universal.

From this definition, only a short step is needed to the conclusion that the true object of consciousness is indeed not the particular, but rather that of which the particular is the mere instantiation or negation, namely, the universal. For Feuerbach, Hegel effects this short step, illicitly, in the first argument of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Consider Hegel's arguments concerning the particular characterized as 'here' and 'now'. Hegel argues that the particular must always be recognized as something spatially and temporally determined, something which is 'here' and 'now'. These determinations define the sensible particular as an immediate. But they are also universal determinations, as determinations of any particular whatsoever. But then the object of consciousness is in fact something

which is determined through universal predicates, or, the object of consciousness is itself something really universal. The object is not a bare particular at all, but those universal determinations predicated of any so-called particular whatsoever.

However, Feuerbach counters, does not this argument itself confuse the abstractions of spatiality and temporality with local 'heres' and 'nows', spaces and times? For Feuerbach, this question is especially crucial regarding space. 'Reason orientates itself only in space.'¹¹ But space must here be understood as a place, the local setting of a sensible object. And the place or local setting of such an object is in fact not a universal determination at all. It is rather that place belonging to the particular alone – to this man, this tree – from which it autonomously presents itself to a receptive, sensible subject. Hegel unjustifiably confuses the particular location of a sensible object with that spatiality which that particular shares with all such objects, and thus concludes that the object is in fact something universal.

Consider further Hegel's comments on the identity of 'the *Dies* ("this") and the *Allgemeine* ("the general")'.¹² Consciousness as 'sense certainty' takes its object to be a discrete particular, 'this' particular. Hegel argues that 'this' is a term which refers indifferently to any particular, to anything characterized by simple immediacy. But then 'this' has a truly universal rather than an actually particular significance. And then the object of consciousness is the 'this', the universal. Particularity and universality for Hegel 'flow together, indistinguishable for thought'.¹³

But the argument for this indistinguishability depends on the assumption that particularity is itself no more than a conceptual determination, the apparent opposite of the universal. Indeed, 'what an immense difference there is between the "this" as an object of abstract thought and the "this" as an object of reality! This wife, for example, is my wife, and this house is my house, although everyone speaks, as I do, of his house and his wife as "this house" and "this wife". This indifference and uniformity of the logical "this" is here interrupted and destroyed by the legal meaning of the word.'¹⁴ Hegel has confused 'this' as referring to a given particular with 'this' as referring to an indefinite variety of particulars or instances; he has confused the 'logical' with the 'legal' meaning of the term. If consciousness' object is a 'this', and 'this' is a term expressing a universal meaning, viz. any particular, then language shows consciousness' object to be actually a universal. But if consciousness' object is a given particular to which the term 'this' refers but whose concrete determinations it does not meaningfully express, then one cannot argue immediately that the universal is consciousness' true object. Hegel unjustifiably assumes that language, in exhibiting those produced universal categories through which consciousness related itself logically to its object, shows also what that object actually and concretely is. And

thus, 'we have before us in the beginning of the *Phenomenology* nothing other than the contradiction between the word, which is general, and the object, which is always a particular. And the idea that relies only on the word will not overcome this contradiction. Just as the word is not the object, so is the being that is spoken or ideated not real being.'¹⁵

From Feuerbach's criticisms of Hegel's opening argument in the *Phenomenology*, two implications follow. First, Hegel's argument depends on an unjustifiable assumption. The assumption, already stated, is that the particular may be taken conceptually, merely as the opposite of the universal, rather than as the concrete individual given in its full 'flesh and blood' presence. This assumption is in principle unjustifiable because it involves confusing the logical meaning of 'this' and of 'here' and 'now' with the uses to which those terms are put in referring to singular data.

Second, the whole of the Hegelian dialectic depends on the opening argument of the *Phenomenology*, and on the assumption lying hidden in it. Hegel's dialectic traces the various phases of the experience of consciousness in terms of the various attitudes which consciousness takes towards its object. This dialectic depends on the belief that the object can be variously defined in terms of the various categorical attitudes taken towards it by consciousness. Only given this belief could Hegel hold that consciousness moves itself through its several dialectical phases by itself giving those 'standards' whereby its comprehensions of the object, and of itself in relation to the object, are progressively revised.¹⁶ Hegel's most basic argument for this belief occurs in the opening examination of sense certainty in the *Phenomenology*. He argues there that the object of consciousness is not truly the sensed particular, but the universal, something determinable through consciousness' own logical determinations. But that argument depends on the illegitimate and assumed identification of the actual sensible particular with 'particularity' logically taken as the opposite of universality. And the whole of the Hegelian dialectic depends on this illegitimate move.

Feuerbach concludes that Hegel's dialectic turns on a concept of 'thought that is separated from sensation . . . the identity of thought with itself'¹⁷, rather than on the recognition in sensation of the real independence of the particular object, which object consciousness does not determine through its own constructs, but passively receives. And he holds that this object is never completely determinable through the universal determination which language expresses. The object is not therefore 'irrational'. 'Existence has a meaning and rationality for itself, also without being utterable.'¹⁸ Particular sensible being is the 'boundary of thought'.¹⁹ It is that from which all thought and language take their start, and upon which they ultimately depend, even though this 'boundary' is

never determinable through the general categories of thought and language. This 'boundary' is accessible only through receptive sensation.

Karl Löwith wholeheartedly endorses these Feuerbachian criticisms of Hegel. He underlines certain problematic features of Hegel's doctrine of linguistic meaning in relation to the sensible particular.

'Sense consciousness', Löwith tells us, 'will never be talked into believing that its object is a universal "this" mediated by negation.'²⁰ Hegel argues that particular items falling under universal concepts are mere negations of the universal, merely 'examples (*Beispiele*) thereof'.²¹ Hegel concludes that the true object of consciousness is the universal, which is always 'mediated' because it has 'examples' or negations. The sheer particular is only an 'example' of that universal which is the true object of consciousness, and which is named in language.

Now if 'sense consciousness will never be talked into believing' this conclusion, is that due to obduracy? No, it is rather an indication of a basic difficulty in Hegel's argument.

Were Hegel really to enter the experience of sensuous consciousness and to shift the emphasis of the *Phenomenology* away from the *logic* of the phenomena, he would then have to acknowledge that sense-certainty in no way refutes itself by being thought and expressed, and he would have to recognize the reason why.²²

Hegel's arguments do not demonstrate the inability of the particular to be the true object of consciousness, because it cannot be adequately expressed in language. They rather show the inadequacy of language, taken logically, to express the particular which sense consciousness recognizes as its actual object. That 'this', 'here' and 'now' are terms which refer to an indefinite variety of particular items is logically true. But that does not show that such items are mere examples of universals. It rather shows the inadequacy of language, logically conceived, to express the richness of the particular datum.

Hegel's problem, Löwith holds, is that he manipulates the logic of 'sense consciousness' linguistic expressions for his own purposes, rather than entering into the richness of the experience of that consciousness itself. 'Actual being is a definite existence, here and now; thought and word are abstractly universal.'²³ Hegel takes the experience of sense consciousness to be fully expressed by the logical import of its linguistic expressions. Because of this, he can never penetrate the experience of sense consciousness to reach that determinate, pre-linguistic particular of which language is but an inadequate expression. Indeed, 'Hegel as a thinker begins with thought rather than with that which is the precondition of all reflection which thought as such cannot anticipate.'²⁴ The language of 'this', 'here' and 'now' originates from and depends upon the

concrete particular, its referent. The concrete particular is always the 'precondition' of such language, although its richness is never adequately expressed thereby. But Hegel considers particularity only as a thought determination, and takes the language of particularity only in its logical significance. Thus he can never reach beyond this significance to the actual particular from which this language is engendered.

Like Feuerbach, Löwith takes this basic flaw in Hegel's arguments to invalidate the entire dialectical project of the *Phenomenology*.

The dubious character of idealism . . . is bound up with its attitude towards nature. The primary model for theoretical mediation is not the primary world of nature, which produces and reproduces itself without human mediation, but rather the secondary world of human spirit.²⁵

Actual particularity both gives rise to thought and language and is independent thereof. Thought and language take their origins from actual particulars, here from 'nature', but the latter can never be thoroughly mediated by the former. Consciousness can never thoroughly mediate its object, overcome the independence of its object from itself. Hegel's *Phenomenology* tries to demonstrate both the possibility and the actuality of such mediation and overcoming. But this is because Hegel never recognizes the kind of independence which the particular object enjoys over against consciousness in the first place. And that in turn is because Hegel never recognizes the particular as an actual datum, but only as the logical referent of language. However, Löwith states,

When, on the one hand, Hegel demands that one give up seeing and hearing to make real thinking possible one might well ask how a thought could subsist without that attentive intuition of the thing in question in terms of which it corrects itself and lets itself be determined.²⁶

II Hegel's first phenomenological argument

Does Hegel fall prey to the criticisms outlined above? If so, then the project of his *Phenomenology* has been undermined at its foundations. But I now want to claim that Hegel does not fall prey to the attacks of Feuerbach and Löwith. Their criticisms fail to appreciate the precise nature of the opening arguments of the *Phenomenology*, and particularly fail in understanding the notion of universality developed therein.

Hegel's starting point in the *Phenomenology* is determined by his intention of examining descriptively the various attitudes which consciousness takes towards its own knowledge,²⁷ i.e. towards the relationship between

its object and itself. This project demands that one begin by examining the most primitive form of these attitudes. And that form, in turn; is that in which consciousness takes itself to be 'immediate knowledge, knowledge of the immediate, of what *is*'.²⁸

Consciousness as sense certainty is, initially, that attitude which consciousness takes towards its object which views the object as sheerly immediate, a sheer givenness that accounts for itself, that is 'mediated' by no other thing. As immediate, this object in no way depends on consciousness, but rather simply is on its own terms, and presents itself to consciousness. 'The object . . . is the real truth, is the essential reality; it *is*, quite indifferent as to whether it is known or not; it remains and stands even though it is not known, while the knowledge does not exist if the object is not there.'²⁹ Consciousness takes this object to be its absolute,³⁰ to be that which is ultimately available to it, to consciousness, to be known.

Consciousness further takes the knowledge which is provided to it through its relation to this object to be the 'richest', the 'truest' and the most certain form of knowledge.³¹ It is the 'richest' form of knowledge, in that the object presents itself to consciousness here in its full, absolute concreteness. It is the 'truest' because the object is 'immediate' in relation to consciousness; nothing stands in between consciousness and its object as a medium which could distort consciousness' knowledge of the object. The immediacy of the object is also the source of consciousness' certainty of its knowledge thereof. In so far as the object here is something immediate, then consciousness' knowledge of this object is 'immediate knowledge',³² knowledge identical with consciousness' direct access to the object itself. Consciousness could be no more certain of any knowledge than of that which arises from its direct access to the immediately present object. Nothing could intervene in its relation to its object to distort its knowledge of the latter. Thus no knowledge could be more certain than that knowledge which is identical with consciousness' absolutely direct relation to its object.³³

Correlative to consciousness' attitude towards its object is its attitude towards itself. Since consciousness takes its object to be absolutely immediate, it takes itself also to be a condition of absolute immediacy. Consciousness takes itself to be nothing more than that which it is in relation to its object. In this relation, consciousness is nothing more than the direct apprehension of that immediate object:

neither the I nor the thing has here the meaning of a manifold relation with a variety of other things, of mediation on a variety of ways. The I here does not contain or imply a manifold of ideas, the I here does not *think* . . . consciousness is I – nothing more than a pure *this*; the

individual consciousness knows a pure *this*, or knows what is individual.³⁴

Further, consciousness takes the object to be the essential term, and itself the inessential term, of the consciousness-object relation. The object is unaffected by its relation to consciousness, presents itself to consciousness as it is, and is the absolute source of the truth of consciousness' knowledge. Consciousness, on the other hand, is affected by the object, in that only given the object does consciousness possess knowledge. It is receptive in its relation to the other, that to which the object presents itself. And it is thoroughly dependent on its object for its knowledge and for the truth of its knowledge.

It is this position which consciousness takes regarding its object and itself which Hegel wishes to examine, in a fashion which will 'deal with it merely as sense certainty contains it'.³⁵ From the point of view of sense certainty itself, in abstraction from any other claims of philosophy or of common sense, can this position regarding the nature of the object and of consciousness be maintained? Hegel responds to this question in a text which is brief, but whose arguments are tortuously complex.

The immediate 'this' which consciousness now takes as its object must, as immediate, be temporally and spatially locatable: it is 'the *Now* and the *Here*'.³⁶ These temporal and spatial specifications are necessary indications of the immediacy of the particular object; the thing is something which *simply* is, something *simply* present here and now. But, Hegel asks,

What is the Now? We reply, for example, the Now is night-time. To test the truth of this certainty of sense, a simple experiment is all we need: write that truth down. A truth cannot lose anything by being written down, and just as little by preserving it and keeping it. If we look again at the truth we have written down, look at it *now*, at *this noon time*, we shall have to say that it is turned stale and become out of date.³⁷

What precisely has 'turned stale' in this 'simple experiment'? Hegel's point is not the trivial truth that the word 'now' has different referents. His point rather concerns the character of the referent. In attempting to relate itself to that which immediately *is*, to that which simply *is* now, consciousness discovers that,

The self maintaining Now is therefore not something immediate but something mediated; for *qua* something that remains and preserves itself, it is determined through and *by means of* the fact that something else, namely day and night, is *not*.³⁸

That which is now can only be recognized as such by consciousness if it is recognized in opposition to the occupants of past time. The present day is recognized in terms of its opposition to the past, in terms of its not being the past night. And more importantly, it is the thing itself which holds within itself this opposition and negation, and which is as such the ground of its being apprehended by consciousness. The present now is itself the negation of its other, the immediate past. It holds within itself this opposition to its other, and only by holding within itself this opposition to its other can it be that which consciousness apprehends as something which is now present. But if this is so, then the thing which consciousness as 'sense certainty' takes to be its object is not something sheerly immediate. It is rather a mediated something, because it both is itself, and holds within itself its opposition to and negation of its other.

This last point is the one which Hegel wishes to make regarding the supposed object of sense consciousness. Sense consciousness takes its object to be immediate, and to be something to which it is related immediately. But consciousness' most primitive attempt to relate itself to this object, by characterizing the object as something which simply is now, reveals the object to be actually something mediated, something that holds within itself mediation, opposition to and negation of its other. Hegel constructs an analogous argument regarding the object characterized as something which simply is here. This object too can only be apprehended as such by consciousness if it is in itself its opposition to and negation of its other, in this case its spatially located other. This object reveals itself as mediated, as something which is what it is only through opposition to its other, rather than as an immediate simplicity.³⁹ Hegel's analysis in no sense does away with the singularity of the sense object. But it does argue that the concrete singular object is internally complex or mediated, and is not a bare, immediate particularity.

At this point Hegel introduces into his argument the themes of universality and language, beginning with a definition of 'the Universal'.

A simple entity of this sort, which is by and through negation, which is neither this nor that, which is a *not this*, and with equal indifference this as well as that – a thing of this kind we call a Universal.⁴⁰

A universal is simple, that is simply self-identical. It is 'by and through negation'; its simple self-identity refers beyond itself to that which it is not, its referents. But it refers to its mediating referents 'with equal indifference'; its simple self-identity is indifferent to the distinct others through which it is, is indifferent to its mediations. For this reason, such a universal is abstract.⁴¹ But consciousness as 'sense certainty' claims its object to be a bare immediate particular, indifferent to itself as a particular which distinguishes itself from other particulars, or, indifferent to

mediations. Then the universal, as understood here, is the *concept of the identity* of the object of consciousness as 'sense certainty', given the identity which such consciousness takes its object to possess. 'The Universal is therefore in point of fact the truth of sense-certainty, the true content of sense experience.'⁴² The object is taken as a sheer particular, something that presents itself to consciousness in a fashion thoroughly indifferent to its mediations. But consciousness cannot successfully claim that this object is the particular which it was formerly taken to be. As indifferent to any mediation, this object is incapable of opposing itself to or distinguishing itself from any other particular thing. Then the object is indifferent to its own particularity.

Hegel's comments about language directly relate to the above point. Sense consciousness attempts to refer to its object with language, so as to express the object's assumed particularity and immediacy. But,

It is as a universal, too, that we give utterance to the sensuous fact. What we say is: 'This', i.e., the universal this; or we say 'it is', i.e., being in general. Of course we do not present before our mind in saying so the universal this, or being in general, but we *utter* what is universal; in other words, we do not actually and absolutely say what in this sense-certainty we really *mean*. Language, however, as we see, is the more truthful; in it we ourselves refute directly and at once our 'meaning'.⁴³

These comments about language exhibit what Hegel has already argued about the object of consciousness and the universal. When sense consciousness calls its object a 'this', it refers to the object as a particular, and as a sheerly unmediated particular thing. But the object cannot be so taken, and language shows that. To refer to something as a 'this' must involve referring to it as something which is 'this and not that'. The activity of referring to the particular in language involves this sort of selectivity. But if the object is simply an unmediated particular, it involves no internal complexity or mediating features in virtue of which it distinguishes itself as 'this' from this or that other particular object. Then the object as so conceived is no true particular object, but only 'the universal this', 'being in general'. Thus it is that, 'Language . . . is the more truthful.' Sense consciousness 'means' to take its object as a bare, unmediated particular, and to refer to it as such. But the very language which must be used to refer to this object shows that the object must be grasped as involving mediation, and must be referred to in language expressing this comprehension. And the underlying point here is that, for Hegel, the object itself is the basis or ground of this necessity. The thing itself demands mediation, and comprehension in terms of its mediation. Language is truthful to the object of sense consciousness, in showing that the

sheer immediate particular is no true particular, even though this same language belies what sense consciousness initially means to say when it refers to its object.

Hegel, then, attempts in the opening paragraphs of the dialectic of 'sense certainty' to argue that the object which sense consciousness first takes as a bare, immediate particular must rather be something mediated. The concept of the identity of the object of consciousness as 'sense certainty' first construes that object as 'the universal', where 'the universal' means self-identical immediacy, involving, but utterly indifferent to, mediations. Language, with reference to 'sense certainty's' object, shows this concept to be the concept of its object. The remaining arguments of the first chapter of the *Phenomenology* develop these positions, by examining the strategies which sense consciousness uses in attempting to retain its original conception of the object. They may thus be examined briefly.

Sense consciousness supposes an immediate relation to the immediate object to yield the 'richest' and 'truest' knowledge. Sense consciousness, continuing on that supposition, now struggles against the destruction of its conception of the object which language reveals to it. Two strategies are available to sense consciousness in this attempt.

First, with the conception of the object revealed through language, sense consciousness must see that the object will not yield the 'rich' and 'true' knowledge of which it was formerly taken to be the source, because the object can no longer be taken as merely a bare particular.⁴⁴ But consciousness still wishes to possess 'rich' and 'true' knowledge. Perhaps it can, if it relies not essentially on its object, but on itself. Sense consciousness still takes itself to be immediate. It can then view itself as that which spontaneously selects out of its mediated object an immediate feature to which it relates itself. Consciousness can view itself as the natural constitutive source of its object as immediate – natural because consciousness itself is something immediate, and therefore something which naturally picks out an immediate posture *vis-à-vis* its object. On these terms, consciousness can still continue to possess what it takes to be optimum knowledge, although it must now view itself as the source of its knowledge, *qua* optimum.⁴⁵ For: 'the disappearance of the particular Now and Here that we "mean" is prevented by the fact that / keep hold on them'.⁴⁶ Consciousness continues to take itself as immediate; it can then be the spontaneous, constitutive source of immediacy in its object. But this self-conception on the part of consciousness, Hegel now argues, breaks down, just as did the initial conception of the object.

The very experience of sense consciousness shows that this consciousness cannot take itself to be an immediate reality. Sense consciousness is, on the one hand, its discrete moments of awareness of or knowledge of its object. But it is also the ongoing experience of an indefinite number

of such discrete moments. And it experiences itself as the synthetic or mediated totality of these moments.

Hegel illustrates these points through an example.

I, *this* I, see the tree, and assert the tree to be Here; *another* I, however, sees the house, and maintains the Here is not a tree but a house. Both truths have the same authenticity – the immediacy of seeing and the certainty and assurance both have as to their specific way of knowing; but one certainty disappears in the other.⁴⁷

Each of these moments of consciousness is a discrete moment. And each is constitutive of the nature of its object as a 'Here'. But each of these discrete moments of consciousness belongs to the same individual. And more, each of these moments of consciousness can be recognized and comprehended by that individual as discrete only in virtue of *its not being* the other. The very singularity of a moment of consciousness involves that moment's containing *within itself* a relation of negation and opposition to its other. To paraphrase Hegel's language, the I is 'this I', the one seeing the tree, only in so far as it distinguishes itself from 'another I', the one seeing the house. The singular moment of consciousness is made up, in its very singularity, out of mediation, out of a relation of negation to its other.

Again, then, Hegel's point is that the concrete singular sense consciousness, like the concrete sense object, is a mediated singular, not a bare, immediate particular. The concept of the identity of sense consciousness, when sense consciousness is supposed to be a simply immediate particular, is again 'the universal', given the definition of 'the universal' mentioned above. In this case again, 'The Universal is . . . in point of fact the truth of sense certainty.'⁴⁸

And here again, language reveals this truth to sense consciousness.

No doubt I 'mean' an individual I, but just as little as I am able to say what I 'mean' by Now, Here, so it is impossible in the case of the I too. By saying 'this Here', 'this Now', 'an individual thing', I am saying all Thises, Heres, Nows, or Individuals. In the same way, when I say 'I', 'this individual I', I say quite generally 'all I's, everyone is what I say, everyone is 'I', this individual I.'⁴⁹

Concreteness is introduced into consciousness' self-conception only when that self-conception involves mediation. The bare particular 'I' is that which is abstract. Any moment of self-consciousness is 'this' moment of self-consciousness, given what sense certainty wants to *mean* by 'this'. If sense certainty 'means' by itself simply this bare particular moment of awareness, then its meaning is necessarily abstract. Language reveals this

abstractness. To refer to the 'I' as a discrete moment of sense consciousness necessarily entails referring to it as made up of mediation, of relationships to other such moments.⁵⁰ Language reveals that its referent must be concretely comprehended as a mediated singularity rather than a bare particular, and that, when comprehended as a simply immediate particular, the concept of its identity is in fact 'the universal'.

With this conclusion, the basis of consciousness' first strategy to retain immediacy in its object breaks down. Sense consciousness viewed itself as something immediate, and thus as naturally capable of being the selective source of immediacy in its object. The breakdown in that self-conception, then, is necessarily accompanied by the loss of sense consciousness' ability to view itself as the natural, spontaneous, constitutive source of objective immediacy.

But this breakdown has not thoroughly done away with consciousness' conception of itself as having the power of constitutive selectivity. Consciousness can still view itself as the selective source of immediacy, although no longer as the spontaneous source of this. One final strategy remains for consciousness, in its effort to keep that posture towards its object which it takes to yield the 'richest' and 'truest' form of knowledge. Consciousness may attempt to constitute selectively *both* itself *and* its object as immediate. That is, consciousness may select out of its experience bare particular instances of itself in relation to bare particular features of its object, posit this relation as the absolute reality inherent in sensation, and then assert that the knowledge which results from this posited relationship is optimum knowledge.

In this way consciousness attempts to view 'sense certainty' as the immediate whole of a posited relationship. It views neither itself nor its object as the term which grounds this relationship. It rather takes each of the terms of the now selectively posited relationship to be co-essential.⁵¹

Consciousness believes its constitution of this relationship between itself and its object in this way will preserve the immediacy from which fully true and certain knowledge results. Hegel underlines the point that this strategy does involve selective positing on consciousness' part, the decision to select from its own experience discrete moments of itself and its object which consciousness will then view as the immediate relationship of sensation.

I, *this* I, assert, then, the Here is a tree, and do not turn around so that for me the Here might become *not* a tree, and I take no notice of the fact that another I finds the here as not tree, or that I myself at some other time take the Here as not-tree, the Now as not-day. I am directly conscious, I intuit, and nothing more, I am pure intuition; I *am* – *seeing, looking*. For myself I stand by the fact, the Now is day-time, or again, by the fact that the Here is tree, and again, by the fact

that the Here is tree, and again, do not compare Here and Now themselves with one another; I take my stand on *one* immediate relation, the Now is day.⁵²

But can consciousness in fact take the stand which it attempts? One may see in the foregoing arguments Hegel's reasons for holding that the particular sense consciousness or 'I' in relation to the immediate particular object must now, as co-equal moments in a relationship, undergo together the same dialectic which they have previously undergone separately. In the selectively constituted relation, both consciousness and its object are taken as bare immediate particulars. But neither can be so characterized. For again, the particular object or 'this' can only be itself in so far as it holds within itself negation, in so far as it is concretely a 'this and not that'. The particularity of the object or of the self is itself only if it distinguishes itself from others in virtue of its internal complexity. A particular must be something mediated. But then, consciousness' attempt selectively to posit itself and its object as immediate terms of an immediate relationship breaks down. And along with this also breaks down the final strategy which sense consciousness adopts in an effort to maintain its initial attitude regarding the truth of its knowledge of its object.⁵³

Hegel takes these arguments to demonstrate that that which sense consciousness has supposed to be the 'truest' and 'richest kind of knowledge' is in fact 'the abstractest and poorest kind of truth'.⁵⁴ It is based on a conception of the object that is supposed to be concrete, but is in fact most abstract. Consciousness has taken the bare immediate particular to be its absolute, final source of guaranteed knowledge. But Hegel claims that consciousness has discovered, from within its own experience, that such a conception of the object wholly lacks reference to the mediated concreteness which the object must possess. The initial understanding of the object by sense consciousness is a most abstract understanding of the object, the conception of an object which could be the source only of abstract and impoverished knowledge. Common-sense consciousness may rebel at philosophy's denial 'that the reality or being of external things in the sense of "thises", particular sense objects, has absolute validity and truth for consciousness'.⁵⁵ But by denying this Hegel claims to show that the object of sense consciousness must be minimally but necessarily taken as involving mediation.

Consciousness' object must be not something immediate and indifferent to mediations. It must be something which is self-identical, and immediate in this sense. But it must be self-identical in virtue of the mediations which it itself involves. It must be a mediated immediacy. This requires a revised analysis of the concepts of 'immediacy' and 'mediation' themselves. 'Immediacy' means now, not simple self-identity, but the self-identity of the object as it recovers itself in its distinguishing or mediating

features. 'Mediation' means now not distinguishing features to which the object itself is indifferent, but those distinguishing features through which the object is its self-identical, and in this sense immediate, self.

But 'immediacy' and 'mediation' were mentioned above as the concepts through which 'the universal' is defined, the latter being the concept of the identity of the object of consciousness as 'sense certainty'. The foregoing, then, generates a revised analysis of the definition of 'the universal', precisely as the concept of the identity of consciousness' object. 'The universal' is now the concept of self-identity not as simple immediacy, but as mediated immediacy, identity which is 'by and through negation', *not* as indifferent to mediating negations, but as self-recovering through mediating negations. The 'principle' of consciousness' object is 'the universal' which 'is in its simplicity a mediated principle'.⁵⁶ The 'universal' is the concept of the self-identity of consciousness' object where self-identity is defined as mediated immediacy. The object of consciousness 'must express this explicitly in its own inherent nature. The object shows itself by so doing to be the *thing with many properties*'.⁵⁷ The perceived thing with many properties is the object of consciousness as a mediated immediacy: it is self-identical, and so immediate, in virtue of the distinguishing properties through which it distinguishes itself as itself from other objects, and so mediated. The 'universal' is, now, self-identity as mediated immediacy. The result of the dialectic of the experience of consciousness as 'sense certainty' is a revised conception of the nature of consciousness' object, and a revised analysis of the definition of the concept of the identity of that object, 'the universal'.

III Hegel and the critics of his opening argument

The question may now be raised, do Hegel's opening arguments in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* succumb to the criticisms directed against them by Feuerbach and Löwith? If the arguments do succumb thereto, then Hegel's entrance into the dialectical project of the *Phenomenology* can only be made invalidly. But I will now argue that, based on the preceding, Hegel's analysis of 'sense certainty' does not fall to the criticisms already outlined. To do this, I will examine the treatments of particularity, universality and language, and dialectic in those criticisms.

(a) Particularity

Feuerbach and Löwith charge that Hegel's first and final characterization of the particular grasps not the object itself, but only the logical particular, the instantiation of the universal. Feuerbach holds that, for Hegel, 'particularity is itself no more than a conceptual determination, the opposite of the universal',⁵⁸ that Hegel comprehends the particular only as the

logical instance of the logical universal. Löwith makes a similar charge against Hegel, in claiming that Hegel examines only the logic of the language used to refer to sense experience, not that actual experience itself. They further charge that Hegel is unable to recognize the particular sense object as the absolutely independent object of thought, as the 'boundary of thought',⁵⁹ or as 'that precondition of all reflection which thought as such cannot anticipate'.⁶⁰

These criticisms of Hegel's arguments encounter difficulties when faced with those arguments themselves. Hegel does not hold that the particular object of consciousness is wholly a logical instance of a categorial universal. Rather, he holds that consciousness' first conception of its object as a particular qua sheerly immediate is a conception of an object the concept of whose identity is 'the universal', where 'the universal' means identity involving but thoroughly indifferent to mediations. The point of his arguments is that consciousness' first conception of its object is not an adequate conception of 'that which is'.⁶¹ It is a conception of the particular object too abstract to allow the object to account for knowledge of itself as a particular.⁶² The object of sense consciousness must be a concrete something which, in virtue of its own content, distinguishes itself from other things. It must be, in itself, not its other, a 'this and not that'.⁶³ Or the object must be, not a sheer immediate something, but a concretely mediated immediacy. Hegel's relevant arguments here do not conclude to the proposition that the particular is a logical instance of a categorial universal. They conclude rather that the object of consciousness must be concretely mediated in its self-identity if it is successfully to show itself as the singular thing which consciousness initially takes its object to be.

For Hegel, the concept of consciousness' object, given the revised analysis of its definition, is indeed 'the universal', where this term means self-identity as concretely mediated immediacy. In claiming this, Hegel is claiming that consciousness' experience of its object gives rise to a concept of the identity of its object which is, at least provisionally, adequate. Then the object is not a 'boundary of thought', a source of conceptualizable presentations whose nature itself cannot be conceptualized, and so a 'precondition of all reflection which thought as such cannot anticipate'. But to deny this in the way that Hegel does is to claim only that the identity of consciousness' object, as the source of intelligible presentations, is itself the object of a concept. This is not to deny the independence and distinctness of the object from consciousness.⁶⁴ It is rather to hold that the identity of this independent and distinct object is itself an object for consciousness not only through preconceptual intuitions of sensation, but also through a concept. And this, Hegel believes, is shown by a phenomenology of consciousness' experience of that object itself. Then the naturalism which holds that consciousness'

access to its object, the source of intelligible presentations, is necessarily pre-conceptual and intuitive, is gratuitous. Phenomenology shows, here at least, that the identity of consciousness' object, as independent of and distinct from consciousness, is the object of a concept.

(b) Universality

The criticisms of Feuerbach and Löwith regarding 'universality' in the dialectic of 'Sense Certainty' are principally addressed to the two roles which they attribute to the universal in the arguments of that text. They charge first that, for Hegel, the universal simply subsumes the particular into itself. The universal plays the role of showing that the sense particular is not the true object of consciousness, by showing that this particular is subsumed into something else, and language exhibits this role. And the universal, they also charge, comes in Hegel's arguments to be the true object of consciousness; it plays this role in the place of the sensible particular, which it has already driven from the scene of consciousness' experience.

These are mistaken assessments of the roles of universality and language in Hegel's relevant arguments, based on insufficiently precise understandings of the meaning of universality and the function of language in those arguments.

First, Hegel's use of 'the universal' in his arguments about the sense particular does, Hegel claims, show that object not to be the true object of consciousness. But the universal shows this by showing itself, when analysed abstractly as immediacy indifferent to mediations, to be the concept of the identity of the supposed object of consciousness as 'sense certainty'. It is in this sense that the universal is 'the truth of sense-certainty, the true content of sense experience'.⁶⁵ Hegel does not claim that the universal simply subsumes the particular into itself. Rather, he claims, in the arguments analysed above, that the universal, again analysed abstractly, exhibits the identity of 'sense certainty's' object as an immediacy indifferent to mediations, and thus exhibits that object itself as an object of which particularity cannot be successfully asserted, in that the object, as simply immediate, does not assert its particularity by distinguishing itself from other particular things.

Language for Hegel, in the relevant arguments, embodies this function of the universal. To refer to something simply as a 'this' is to characterize it through language as a concrete something which fails to distinguish itself from other things. Thus, 'language . . . is more truthful; in it we ourselves refute directly and at once our own meaning'.⁶⁶ The 'meaning' which language refutes is that which sense consciousness initially assigns to its object; bare immediate particularity. But it refutes this meaning by exhibiting the necessary, mediated concreteness of the sensed thing. For language to be the revelatory medium of the concreteness of the object

is far different from that function of indicating the simple subsumption of the particular into the universal which Feuerbach and Löwith attribute to it in Hegel's argument.

Feuerbach and Löwith also charge that the universal comes to replace the sense particular as the object of consciousness for Hegel. And this criticism, while wrong, has an edge of truth to it. Hegel does argue that the universal, given the revised analysis of its definition, does indicate that the object of consciousness cannot be taken as a particular which 'has meaning and rationality for itself . . . without being utterable',⁶⁷ something which can be grasped not through conceptualization or linguistic articulation, but only through 'attentive intuition'.⁶⁸ This for Hegel is equivalent to denying the bare immediacy or particularity of the sense object. The sheerly immediate item cannot be conceptualized, but only intuitively received. Hegel does argue that this item is not the true object of consciousness. But he argues this, in the text, by arguing that the concrete object of sense consciousness is a mediated immediacy, and as such something whose identity can be the object of a concept. This is not to collapse the distinction between being and thought. Hegel's denial of the ineffability of the object of sense consciousness does not effect the simple assimilation of this object into the generic universal. The denial mentioned here rather retains the distinction between being and thought, and shows how, given this distinction, the being of the object is none the less available to thought, to conceptualization and linguistic reference, however primitive. Hegel's fundamental denial is the denial of bare immediacy to the sense object. But this denial then yields the affirmation that that object is mediately concrete and therefore of itself available to conceptualization and language. To affirm this is not to argue the intelligibility of the sense object, again, by simply doing away with it through assimilating it to the abstract universal.

Thus, as Charles Taylor points out, 'Hegel concludes, there is no unmediated knowledge of the particular'.⁶⁹ But he concludes this by concluding that there is no unmediated particular thing. The object of sense must be at least sufficiently concrete to distinguish itself as one thing from other things. It must involve mediation. It is then something available not to mute intuition, but to the rational conceptualization of its identity as a mediated immediacy.

(c) *Dialectic*

These comments lay the ground for a response to the third category of criticisms which Feuerbach and Löwith direct at Hegel. They charge that Hegel's entrance into the phenomenological dialectic involves an irremediable question-begging. Phenomenology for Hegel studies the various attitudes which consciousness takes towards its object and towards itself. This study depends on the premise that consciousness can come to

a progressively more concrete relation to its object by adopting progressively more concrete conceptual attitudes towards it. But this implies the belief that the object is something inherently available for conceptualization. And, our critics charge, Hegel can hold this only if he holds that the true object of consciousness is the generic universal, whose moments are by definition conceptualizable, rather than the particular, which is both the ground of all conceptual activity and something to which consciousness' relation is finally not dialectical, but passive. Hegel can make this identification of the generic universal with the true object of consciousness only if he further illicitly identifies the actual particular with the logical particular which instantiates the universal.

Hegel's first arguments in the dialectic of sense certainty certainly do represent an entrance into the phenomenological dialectic. But not one of the sort which Feuerbach and Löwith suggest, as can be seen from the above. Hegel holds neither that the true object of consciousness is a generic universal nor that it is a bare particular. He examines the experience of sense consciousness and concludes that the object of consciousness is, at least, a self-identical concrete reality, involving mediation, and an object whose identity is available to conceptualization. If so, then consciousness can progressively concretize its relation to its object through progressive revisions of its concepts of the object's identity. But again, this does not simply deny the distinction between consciousness and its object. It rather denies that formulation of this distinction which holds that the object is finally an ineffable beyond, an intuitively accessible 'something I *know* not what' which is yet inexplicably the ground of language and thought. Hegel's entrance into the dialectic of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* does not involve question-begging, but rather a conception of the object of consciousness which is in fact more concrete than that held by his naturalistic opponents.

In summary, then, Hegel's first arguments in the *Phenomenology* do not collapse the sense particular into the generic universal as the true object of consciousness, or necessarily assume the unassumable as a justification for dialectical phenomenology. These arguments attempt to demonstrate that the object of consciousness must at least be concretely mediated. They attempt to develop an understanding of the universal as that which comprehends the concrete mediateness of the object. They develop in turn an understanding of the object as *in itself* something intelligible, rather than as the ineffable and inexplicable ground of thought. And these arguments finally introduce the dialectic of consciousness by showing that the object, as itself concretely mediated, can be progressively approached by that consciousness which progressively comprehends its actual mediations.

Notes

1 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 144. Hereafter, *Phenomenology*. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 74. Hereafter, *Phänomenologie*.

2 *Phenomenology*, p. 142; *Phänomenologie*, p. 72.

3 *Phenomenology*, p. 142; *Phänomenologie*, p. 73. Cf. K. R. Dove, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', in Warren E. Steinkraus, ed., *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1971), p. 40 [reprinted above, pp. 17–38, R.S.].

4 *Phenomenology*, p. 143; *Phänomenologie*, p. 73.

5 Cf. Hyppolite, *Logique et existence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), p. 29. Hyppolite locates Hegel's opposition to this position in relation to Hegel's broader philosophical concerns.

6 Hegel, Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, trans. K. R. Dove, in Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 182. *Phänomenologie*, p. 73.

7 Karl Löwith, 'Mediation and Immediacy in Hegel, Marx and Feuerbach', trans. K. R. Dove, in Steinkraus, op cit., p. 132.

8 *Phenomenology*, p. 150; *Phänomenologie*, p. 80.

9 Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. M. H. Vogel (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), p. 39. Feuerbach, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. II, ed. Bolin and Jodl (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1904) pp. 282–3. Hereafter *Principles*, *Werke*, II. 'The thought of speculative or absolute philosophy . . . determines being as immediate or unmediated. For thought – at least for the thought which we have before us – being is nothing more than this . . . for being, as the opposition of thought within thought, is nothing more than an idea itself.'

10 *Principles*, p. 44; *Werke*, II, p. 228.

11 *Principles*, p. 61; *Werke*, II, p. 307. See Henri Avon, *Ludwig Feuerbach ou la Transformation du Sacré* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), pp. 40–4, regarding the significance of 'space in Feuerbach's critique of Hegel'.

12 *Principles*, p. 43; *Werke*, II, p. 287.

13 *ibid.*

14 *ibid.*

15 *ibid.*

16 See *Phenomenology*, pp. 141–2; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 72–3.

17 *Principles*, p. 64; *Werke*, II, p. 310.

18 *Principles*, p. 44; *Werke*, II, p. 288.

19 *Principles*, p. 40; *Werke*, II, p. 284.

20 Löwith, op. cit., p. 135.

21 *ibid.*

22 *ibid.*, pp. 134–5.

23 *ibid.*, p. 132.

24 *ibid.*, p. 136.

25 *ibid.*, p. 137.

26 *ibid.*

27 *Phenomenology*, p. 135; *Phänomenologie*, p. 66.

28 *Phenomenology*, p. 149; *Phänomenologie*, p. 79.

29 *Phenomenology*, p. 151; *Phänomenologie*, p. 81.

30 Each phase of consciousness initially takes its conception of the object to

be a conception of the 'Absolute', i.e. of that which most fundamentally is, and is available to knowledge.

31 *Phenomenology*, p. 149; *Phänomenologie*, p. 79.

32 *ibid.* Cf. Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (Paris: Aubier, 1946), pp. 82–5.

33 Cf. Quentin Lauer, *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1970), p. 41. As Lauer points out, the subject matter which Hegel analyses in his opening phenomenological arguments is not sensation as such, but its certainty regarding the nature of its object, and of itself in relation to its object.

34 *Phenomenology*, p. 150; *Phänomenologie*, p. 81.

35 *Phenomenology*, p. 151; *Phänomenologie*, p. 81.

36 *ibid.*

37 *ibid.*

38 *Phenomenology*, p. 152; *Phänomenologie*, p. 81.

39 *Phenomenology*, pp. 152–3; *Phänomenologie*, p. 82.

40 *Phenomenology*, p. 152; *Phänomenologie*, p. 82.

41 J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-Examination* (New York: Collier, 1962), p. 288, for a characterization of the concrete, as opposed to the abstract, universal in Hegel.

42 *Phenomenology*, p. 152; *Phänomenologie*, p. 82.

43 *ibid.*

44 *Phenomenology*, p. 153; *Phänomenologie*, p. 83.

45 *ibid.* 'The certainty is now found to lie in the opposite element, namely in knowledge, which was formerly the non-essential factor. Its truth now lies in the object as my (*meinen*) object, or lies in the "meaning" (*Meinen*), in what I "mean" it is because I know it. Sense certainty is thus indeed banished from the object, but it is not thereby done away with; it is merely forced back into the I.'

46 *Phenomenology*, p. 154; *Phänomenologie*, p. 83.

47 *ibid.*

48 *Phenomenology*, p. 152; *Phänomenologie*, p. 82.

49 *Phenomenology*, p. 154; *Phänomenologie*, p. 83.

50 Cf. H. Kainz, *Hegel's 'Phenomenology', Part I, Analysis and Commentary* (Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1976), pp. 63–4.

51 *Phenomenology*, p. 155; *Phänomenologie*, p. 84. 'We arrive in this way at the result, that we have put the *whole* of sense certainty as its essential reality, and no longer one of its moments . . . Thus it is only the whole of sense certainty which persists therein as immediacy and in consequence excludes from itself all the oppositions which in the foregoing had a place there.'

52 *Phenomenology*, p. 155; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 84–5.

53 See *Phenomenology*, pp. 156–8; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 85–7, for Hegel's résumé of the arguments regarding this final strategy employed by sense consciousness.

54 *Phenomenology*, p. 149; *Phänomenologie*, p. 79.

55 *Phenomenology*, p. 158; *Phänomenologie*, p. 87.

56 *Phenomenology*, p. 163; *Phänomenologie*, p. 90.

57 *ibid.*

58 *Principles*, p. 43; *Werke*, II, p. 287.

59 *Principles*, p. 40; *Werke*, II, p. 284.

60 Löwith, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

61 *Phenomenology*, p. 131; *Phänomenologie*, p. 63.

62 Cf. Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure*, p. 87.

63 Cf. Daniel J. Cook, *Language in the Philosophy of Hegel* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), p. 188. Cook expresses this point by stating that, for Hegel, 'there is no such thing as a meaningful experience of a particular apart from its relation with other particulars'.

64 In his phenomenology of self-consciousness, Hegel does assert the identity of consciousness with itself in its object, and thus deny the simple independence of the object from consciousness. But this denial, as well as consciousness' unmediated assertion of the simple independence of its object from itself, is mutually sublated in the transition from 'self-consciousness' to 'Reason' in the *Phenomenology*. Cf. Lauer, op. cit., pp. 126-31.

65 *Phenomenology*, p. 152; *Phänomenologie*, p. 82.

66 *ibid.*

67 *Principles*, p. 44; *Werke*, II, p. 288.

68 Löwith, op. cit., p. 137.

69 Charles Taylor, 'The Opening Arguments of the Phenomenology', in MacIntyre, ed., *Hegel, A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 165.

Hegel's 'inverted world'

Hans-Georg Gadamer

The function of the 'inverted world' within the whole of Hegel's history of the experience of consciousness is much more difficult to ascertain than that of almost any other section. Still, for my part, I would characterize this doctrine of the 'inverted world' in the chapter on 'Force and Understanding' as one of the most central in the structure of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I can tie my argument on this point into what R. Wiehl has shown, namely, that the beginning of the *Phenomenology* cannot be comprehended at all without direct reference to Kant's philosophy.² If one looks at the main divisions of Hegel's phenomenology of consciousness, one cannot help but see that the task he set for himself was to show how the various modes of knowledge, the interaction of which Kant examines – intuition, understanding, and the unity of apperception or self-consciousness – are actually internally related.

In the final analysis, Hegel's chapter on the phenomenology of consciousness is dominated by the question of how consciousness becomes self-consciousness, i.e. how consciousness becomes conscious of the fact that it is self-consciousness. The thesis that consciousness is self-consciousness has been a central doctrine in modern philosophy since Descartes, and thus, Hegel's idea of phenomenology lies in the Cartesian tradition. This is amply demonstrated by parallels in the work of his contemporaries, in particular the largely unknown book by Sinclair, the friend of Hölderlin and Hegel to whom the 'Sphragis' in Hölderlin's *Rhein Hymn* is addressed. The book bears the significant title *Truth and Certainty*. Obviously, with the same intention as Fichte and at approximately the same time as Hegel, Sinclair attempts to point the way from certainty to truth beginning quite explicitly with the Cartesian concept of *cogito me cogitare*.

Now, when describing the phenomenon of consciousness in his phenomenology of mind or spirit, Hegel assumes from the start that that

in which knowing will fulfil itself, that in which alone the concurrence of certainty and truth can be given, cannot merely be consciousness of the objective world which becomes conscious of itself. Rather, it must transcend the ontological status of individual subjectivity. It must be spirit. On the way to this result Hegel's first thesis is: consciousness is self-consciousness. And within Hegel's system the purpose of the first part of the *Phenomenology* is to justify this thesis convincingly. Hegel does this by 'demonstrating' the conversion of consciousness into consciousness of itself, i.e. the necessary transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. Thus, Hegel quite consciously makes Kant's conceptual schema – intuition, understanding and self-consciousness – the basis for his own divisions. It is R. Wiehl's contribution to have shown that in looking back from the chapter on 'Force and understanding', one must view 'Sense certainty' as the point of departure: namely, as consciousness as yet entirely unconscious of its essential self-consciousness.

As a preliminary methodological observation, let me add that we will come to see how Hegel spells out his thesis – and to that end our efforts will be devoted – when we verify in our own experience what Hegel himself requires when he says that everything hinges on the necessity of transitions. We are consciousness looking on. That is the perspective of the *Phenomenology*. And we ourselves must grasp which forms of consciousness appear and in which order they emerge in distinguishing themselves from each other. Hegel's claim that the dialectical transitions are necessary is made good and verified again and again if one reads carefully. Careful reading of him – and not only of him – has the remarkable consequence that precisely that which one extracts in painstaking attempts at interpretation of the section which one is reading is stated explicitly in the next section. Every reader of Hegel has this experience: the more he explicates the content of a particular train of thought which he has before him, the more certain he can be that that explication will follow in the next section of Hegel's text. That implies that the subject matter of the discussion is always the same and that the same thing is presented on different levels of explication and reveals itself as the proper and single object or content – something of central importance to all philosophy, though it is perhaps nowhere as obvious as in Hegel.

At the beginning of the *Phenomenology* this 'same thing' takes the form of consciousness as self-consciousness. Thus, from the start, one must understand the task which Hegel proposes for himself in the *Phenomenology*, namely, to treat self-consciousness, Kant's synthesis of apperception, not as something previously given, but as something to be specifically demonstrated as the truth in all consciousness. All consciousness is self-consciousness. If we recognize this as the theme, then the position in Hegel's system of the chapter on the 'inverted world', which I am about to discuss, becomes clear. It is in the chapter on 'Force and

understanding' where the thought-provoking and startling formulation 'the inverted world' is to be found. Hegel is a Schwabian and startling people is his passion, just as it is the passion of all Schwabians. But what he intends here and how he arrives at this turn of speech are particularly difficult to grasp. I shall attempt to show how Hegel's 'inverted world' might be understood by means of historical references and in what sense the true world hidden behind the appearances can be called 'inverted'.

Our concern here is with the text beginning with *Ph* 110ff (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Meiner, Hamburg, 1952). The decisive phrase, 'inverted world', follows on page 121. The true world of which Hegel speaks on page 111 is the world whose inversion, making it the 'inverted world', is set forth on page 121. Here, on page 111, it is not yet recognized as the 'inverted world', but rather poses as the true world and nothing but the truth.

The train of Hegel's thought has led through the determination of the truth of perception as the concept of force.³ The perceiving consciousness which the onlooking philosophical consciousness observes learns that the truth intended by the thesis of the 'thing with properties' is not the 'thing with properties' but rather force and the play of forces. As I see it, that is the step which Hegel demands that the philosophical consciousness grasp. It must realize that the resolution of the thing into many things – i.e. the atomism resulting when one approaches what a thing is or its properties are by means of modern chemical analysis, for example – is not sufficient if one seeks to understand what the reality of the thing and its properties actually is. Perception (*Wahrnehmen*) remains too external. In perceiving, it takes (*nimmt*) properties and things that have properties to be true (*wahr*). But does what is taken in this way to be true, for example, the chemical structure of things, constitute their entire and true reality? One must see that, in fact, behind these properties there are forces which have their effects in opposition to each other. The formulas of the chemist express the constitution of a substance. But, precisely as the modern development and transformation of chemistry into physics has confirmed, this substance really is a play of forces.

I have now come to the place where a more precise analysis must begin. The dialectic of force is one of those sections of Hegel's work on which he himself has most thoroughly commented, since it not only appears in the *Phenomenology*, but also, in much more lengthy analysis, in the *Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia* respectively. It has something so immediately compelling and illuminating about it that Hegel could be said to see what everybody would see if all sophism were dispensed with.

The argument is convincing that a false abstraction is made when one says, 'Here is a force which seeks to express itself and which does so when its expression is elicited.' To be sure, in this way of putting it the reality of what we have before us would be stated. But, as anyone can

see, there is no question that that which elicits an expression of force must in fact be a force itself. What we have before us is thus always a play of forces. In this sense, eliciting and being elicited are the same process. Further, it is equally true – and in this consists the dialectic of force and expression of force – that force is not at all potential force which holds itself back, but rather exists only as its effect. The understanding of this reality as a relationship of self-identical, immutable substances to changing, accidental properties, in fact, proves to be an external one, and at that point we become aware of the internal reality of the thing: force. But the assertion that there ‘exists’ a force by itself apart from its expression and isolated from the context of all forces is also a false abstraction. What exists are forces and their interplay. If one examines the forms of consciousness corresponding to these experiences of the object, perception appears to be relating itself to its object externally. It believes it is perceiving the thing which remains the same plus that which changes on its exterior. In comparison to perception, the form of science referred to here as understanding – precisely because it penetrates behind this exterior, strives to get behind it, and searches out the laws governing the forces – has much better comprehension of the real truth.

That is the preparatory step which Hegel takes here (pp. 110ff). Let me insert ahead of time a general comment about this passage: in analysing Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, one always observes that each new mode of consciousness is presented in two forms. First, in a dialectic or aporetic ‘for us’, Hegel points up the contradiction lying in the presumed object as such and, at the same time, shows how contradictory the consciousness of this object is in the form it presents itself to us. Second, he exhibits the movement in which the consciousness under observation learns of these contradictions itself and is led to abandon its position, i.e. to change its belief about the object; for the object is not at all what it appeared to be. The consequence of this for us observers is that we grasp the necessity of proceeding to a new form of consciousness, and we can expect now that what it believes will actually be the case. It is demonstrated for us that the consciousness, which is given in sense certainty, perception, or understanding, respectively, is not valid. It is not real knowing. Thus we must proceed beyond the consciousness which appears in these forms, for that consciousness involves itself in contradictions which make it impossible for it to stay with the ‘truth’ it had assumed and which make the untruth of its assumptions clear to us. Of course, as whatever particular consciousness it is (for example, that of the physicist) it persists stubbornly where it finds itself and refuses to move beyond itself. As Hegel puts it, it is forever forgetting what it has learned and thus remains the same form of consciousness. We, the philosophical consciousness, need a better memory and must comprehend that such knowing is not all knowing and the world comprehended by it,

not the entire world. Philosophy thus sees the necessity of getting beyond such stubborn consciousness. It is our task here to observe how that transition is accomplished.

What is first developed is the contradiction as it presents itself for us. Properly speaking that is not the dialectic of the phenomenon, for Hegel first treats the contradictions lying in the thought of the object, in its essence. Thus, the dialectic of the essential and inessential, of the thing and its properties, of force and its expression, is a dialectic of the concept and finds its proper place in the *Logic*. The phenomenological insight which Hegel extracts from this subject matter and for the sake of which he develops it is in respect to knowledge of it: specifically, it is the insight that knowing here must proceed beyond perception if it is to do justice to the task proper to the understanding – finding out what actually is. We are now to look into the inside. At first that is meant quite straightforwardly in comparison to the superficial differentiation of immutable thing and changing properties. If we look in this way into the inside, what do we see? What is the inner essence of the external appearance? One thing is clear: looking into the inside is a matter for the understanding, not sense perception. It is what Plato characterizes as *noein* in contrast to *aisthēsis*. Thus, the object of 'pure' thinking (*noein*) is obviously distinguished by the fact that it is not given to the senses.

It is convincing, therefore, when Hegel speaks on page 111 of the 'innerly true' as 'the *absolute universal*, and thus not merely sense universal, which has developed for the understanding'. That is the *noēton eidos*, if I may express myself in Plato's terms for the moment. In it 'there now opens up for the first time a supersensible world as the true world above the appearing world'. Here is the step which Plato takes.⁴ The universal is not the common element in sense appearances which *doxa* has before it. It is the *ontos on*, the *eidos*, the universal of the understanding and not that of the sensuous in its appearing otherness. Hegel's way of building upon this thought has a most singular quality – 'above the disappearance of this world, the constant world beyond'. Here Plato is made to sound very much like Christianity, and since for Hegel this standpoint is by no means to be the ultimate truth, one can almost hear Nietzsche here and his formulation, 'Christianity is Platonism for the masses.' Indeed, the structure which Hegel is describing is that of an extreme conceptual abstraction which, as will be demonstrated subsequently, is characteristic not only of the Platonic and Christian position, but also of that of modern science.

The supersensible world is said to be the true world. It is 'what remains in disappearance' – a way of putting things often found in Hegel. We will encounter precisely this expression again when we set about understanding the 'inverted world'. For, to give an indication of where we are headed, it will emerge there that what remains is precisely what is real

where everything is continually disappearing. The real world exists precisely as continual change, *constant* change. Constancy, then, is no longer merely the opposite of disappearance, rather, it is the truth of disappearance. That is the thesis of the 'inverted world'.

How does Hegel reach this conclusion? Here, rather than logically reconstructing his course, I would prefer to bring the phenomenon itself so clearly into focus that we can see just what consciousness supposes as the truth in each truth which consciousness believes it has hold of. R. Wiehl has emphasized correctly that belief always remains present in the form of suppositions or contentions which keep the entire process of exhibiting the forms of consciousness moving. Thus Hegel now raises the question of what it is that consciousness supposes here. What is this inner realm into which the understanding peers? What is this consciousness of the beyond? Is an empty beyond meant? Do we have a prefiguration of the 'unhappy consciousness' here?

No, Hegel says, that is not true. This beyond is not empty, for 'it comes from appearance' – it is the truth of appearance. What kind of a truth? In answer to that Hegel hits upon a brilliant formulation: the beyond, he says, is the appearance *as* appearance. That is, it is appearance which is not the appearance of something else, and which is no longer to be differentiated from something lying beyond it which is 'really'. On the contrary, it is nothing but appearance, and thus it is not appearance as opposed to reality, but rather appearance as the real itself. Appearance is a whole of showing (*Schein*), as it is put on page 110. Hegel means here that the appearance is not just an expression of force which, when the force weakens, nullifies itself and its effect. Rather, it is the whole of reality. It not only has its ground; it is as the essence showing itself. As opposed to shallow talk of a thing 'having' properties, indeed even as opposed to the insight which penetrates behind that to force which either expresses itself or remains potential, there opens up now a view into the inner essence of things as the 'absolute reciprocity' of the play of forces. Here the reality is better comprehended than in the superficial view of perception. In so far as this play of forces proves to be lawful, the 'appearances', *ta phainomena*, are redeemed. 'The unity in the play of force itself, and the truth of it, is the law of force' (114). Correspondingly, in the *Logic* it is said of the determinations of reflection that their 'showing', i.e. the 'showing' of the formal determinations, 'consummates itself in appearance' (*L* II, 101) (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, Meiner, Leipzig, 1951). The phrase 'the whole of showing' leads in this way to the concept of law. One can easily see that the law is something simple in comparison to the shifting interplay of forces affecting each other. As the unitary law, it determines the entirety of appearances. The supposed difference between forces which characterizes their effect – eliciting, being elicited, being potential, being expressed – this difference of the universal is in

fact a unity. This way of putting things is peculiarly Hegelian, but the truth of it can be seen and verified in the phenomenon: indeed the difference is in no way one between forces separated from each other, which occur by themselves and which one relates *ex post*. Rather it is the appearance of the simple, identical law.

In what follows, accordingly, the law of nature, the one law fully explaining all phenomena and ultimately dominating the realm of mechanics, emerges as the truth of the object under investigation. That is a most important point. Here one might be reminded of those interpreters of Plato who took Plato's idea for the law of nature. Their view was unintentional Hegelianism, for Hegel himself goes so far as to make this identification. However, it will turn out that he does not stay with it, and we shall see why.⁵ In any event, he can say for the time being that the universal difference 'is expressed in the law as the constant picture of the fluctuating appearance'. The law is what remains in disappearance. Reality is viewed as the world of laws, which remains beyond disappearance. 'The supersensible world is thus a tranquil realm of laws' – beyond the perceived world, but present in the latter nevertheless as 'its immediate, still image'. That is on page 114f., and here Hegel even speaks of this realm as the still image of constant change.

Unquestionably, this phrase sounds not only like Plato but also like Galileo. Galileo is most certainly there in what follows, or more correctly, Newton. For implied here is obviously the completion of Galileo's system of mechanics with implicit reference to gravity as the universal definition of body. Hegel now demonstrates that the step taken here into the supersensible, true world, the step taken by the understanding, is only a first step which must be recognized as falling short of the whole truth. It is impossible to say that the truth of reality is the natural law. (Natorp, for one, has interpreted Plato as saying this.) Hegel shows, namely, that a formulation such as the 'realm of laws' always implies that the whole of appearance is not contained therein. Either consciousness necessarily involves itself in the dialectic of the law and its instances or a multiplication of laws results. *In concreto* one might think here of how Galileo's law of falling bodies was contested by the Aristotelians of his time because it did not explain the whole appearance. Indeed, the whole appearance in this case contains the moment of resistance, of friction. Another law must be added here to the law for free-falling bodies, which never exist: the law of friction governing the resistance of the medium. That means that in principle no appearance is a 'pure' instance of the law.

In the case of our example we thus have two laws if we actually wish to achieve the goal of portraying the real appearance in the still image of laws. The attempt to extend mechanics in this way in order that it might deal successfully with the 'impure' instances of the laws leads at first to a multiplication of the laws. However, the moving appearances

are thereby 'understood' essentially as a whole, and thus a vision of the unity in lawfulness opens up, a vision which finds its ultimate realization in the integration of terrestrial physics and celestial mechanics. That, according to Hegel, is what is implied in the thesis of 'universal attraction', i.e. the thesis that 'everything has a constant difference from everything else'. This means that the coincidental determinations based on things as they appear to the senses independently of each other are not the basis for differentiating these things. Rather, the proper basis is the essential determination of every body as constituting a force field. That is the new perspective, from which it is seen that force is essentially not one force in distinction from another, but rather distinguished within itself. Thus electricity, for example, is always positive and negative, i.e. exists as the voltage which we call electric power. To be sure, it exists only in the understanding as this difference in designation. If, for instance, the play of forces is taken as the law of positive and negative electricity, the object intended is the voltage, which is actually electric energy and not two different forces. Thus the truth of the play of forces is the unitary lawfulness of reality, the law of appearance (*L II 124ff.*).

There is a dialectic on the side of consciousness corresponding to the dialectic of the object which brought out the untruth in talk of different forces. It is the dialectic of explanation, namely, that the law is different from the reality which it determines only in the understanding. The tautologousness of explanation can be demonstrated using the example of phonetic laws. In this instance one speaks of the laws of modification which 'explain' the changes in sound within a language. But the laws, naturally, are nothing other than that which they explain. They do not even hint at making any other claim. All grammatical rules have the same tautological character. In these nothing at all is explained. What in truth is the life of the language is simply stated as a law governing the language.

I spoke just now of the life of the language intentionally, for our explication is headed in the direction of this concept, and that brings me here to Hegel's doctrine of the 'inverted world'. For what is always lacking when we allow laws to define changes in appearance? Why do these laws fall short of the true reality? Because change as such is missing in this Platonic-Galilean conception of the tranquil realm of laws or unitary lawfulness. Hegel speaks here of the absoluteness of change, i.e. the principle of alteration. Aristotle had a similar criticism of Plato: the ideas, the *eidē*, he argued, are more *aitia akinēsias ē kinēseōs*, more an answer to the question 'What does *not* change in nature?' than an answer to the question 'What is nature?' For nature as a whole, as Aristotle says, is that which has the *archē tēs kinēseōs en eautō*, that which changes of itself.

Here are Hegel's words at the end of this section, in which the 'inverted

world' is first mentioned by name (p. 121): 'For the first supersensible world was only the *immediate* elevation of the perceived world into the element of the universal' – elevation here to be interpreted as the *ascensus* of Plato's allegory of the 'cave', i.e. as an ascent to the noetic world of the permanent idea. 'The supersensible world necessarily had its corresponding image in the perceived world.' The weakness of the world of ideas is, then, that it is only in opposition to the perceived world taken as unreal. Aristotle's objection to Plato's doubling of the world is meant similarly. Why this copy of the perceived world? Why the noetic world? Is not the mathematically figured world lacking in what is most important? Is it not the 'true world' only *for* this changing, moving, perceived world, and does it not lack the principle of change and alteration which constitutes the being of the perceived world after all?⁶ Accordingly, Hegel concludes, 'The first realm of laws was lacking in this, but as the inverted world it now contains it.' A world which contains the *archē kinēseōs*, and as such is the true world, is an inversion of Plato's world in which motion and alteration were supposed to be naught. This world too is supersensible, that is the alterations here are not merely 'different' and hence unreal, but rather are understood *as motions*. This world is not just the tranquil realm of laws which all alteration must obey; rather it is a world in which everything moves because everything contains the origin of change in itself. That appears to be a pure reversal, and modern philosophical research has also struck upon the image of 'reversal' for Aristotle's reinterpretation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas. The *tode ti*, not the highest *eidos*, is the primary substance (J. Stenzel).

But to what extent does this reversal in ontological emphasis justify calling the true world *verkehrt* in the sense of 'perverted'? What form does this second supersensible world take? To achieve complete clarity here I must return to what was under consideration before. As an example of differential in force Hegel uses electricity, which he formalizes as the dialectic of what is of the same and different names. That dialectic appears in electricity as the difference between positive and negative. Hegel's example, however, need not limit us. What Hegel illustrates at any given point with a particular example is often also substantiated in other 'spheres'. Here the expression 'of the same name' shall be our guide. In Greek what is of the same name (homonymous) is called *homōnumon* or in Latin, *univocum*. That of the same name is, if viewed scholastically, the genus. Law and genus are here to be taken as one – they both are characterized by the fact that properly speaking they *exist* only as their various instances. To be clear about this one should say that that of the same name stands in need of, that is refers to, that named differently. The genus of hoofed animals refers to horses, donkeys, mules, camels etc. The differently named species are what the genus means, its truth. And similarly, each single species refers to the different individuals.

If we think that through, we are led to the ultimate conclusion that the difference or what is different, i.e. that which is neither expressed nor contained in that of the same name, is precisely what is real. Again we recognize a theme from antiquity, for this point is basic to Aristotle's criticism of Plato's 'Idea' and to Aristotle's own teaching. The *eidos* is only an aspect of the *tode ti*: or, as Hegel will put it (p. 124), this 'inverted' supersensible world contains the world which it inverts. It contains the *eidos* as *what* constitutes the 'this-here' in the *tode ti* and which alone provides the answer to the question which the understanding raises, namely, *ti esti?* (cf. Aristotle's *Categories*). Aristotle too cannot answer this differently from Plato. When I have a this-something before me and am asked 'What is it?', I can only answer with the *eidos*. In this sense the standpoint of the understanding is all-inclusive. But that does not mean that reality is only the *eidos*. Quite the opposite: what is real is the individual which is 'of this species' and of which it can be said that it is of this type. But how can Hegel assert that this appearing existent contains its reversal in itself as a perversion? Why is the true reality called the *verkehrte* world?

I would like to pursue a line of thought here which will make the concept of the inverted or perverted world, respectively, comprehensible. What appears in one way or another is never 'pure' *eidos*, although the *eidos* is only present in appearance. As Leibniz puts it, no egg is like another. No instance is a pure case of law. The real world as it exists in opposition to the 'truth' of the law is thus perverted. Things do not occur in it in a way that would correspond to the ideas of an abstract mathematician or a moralist. Indeed, the live reality of it consists precisely in its perversion. And that is its function in the *Phenomenology's* dialectical process of demonstration – the end result will be that being inverted in itself is being turned towards itself or relating itself to itself, and that, precisely, is the structure of Life.

But does Hegel really have a sense of being inverted as being wrong in mind? Does he not always mean the dialectical reversal, and does he not want to say here too that the true world is not that supersensible world of tranquil laws, but rather the reverse of this? That of the similar which is dissimilar, the changing, is the truth – in this sense inversion constitutes the essence of one side of the supersensible world (p. 123). But Hegel cautions quite expressly that the matter cannot be imagined in a physical sense, as though it were a case of the inversion (reversal) of something established, i.e. as though there were a supersensible world to begin with and then also a second inverted one. As stated on page 123, the reversal is much more reflection into self and not opposition of one thing to another. The dialectical point of this reversal is obviously that when I take the opposite (the inverted-perverted world) to be true 'in and for itself', the truth is necessarily the opposite of itself. For in

what it is in and for itself the reality of appearance had, in fact, proven to be more than the pure instances of laws. That implies, however, that that reality is also the law of appearance. It is both: the law and the perversion of the law. It is the opposite of itself. If we take as our example for this Hegel's critique of thought-things which only ought to be, of the hypotheses and all the other 'invisible truths of an ever recurring ought' (*Ph* 190), then, indeed, the reasonable view of reality would reject the vacuous universality of such hypotheses and laws even though reality includes these. What is reasonable and concrete is the reality determined by the principle of change. Abstractions are always confounded because things never turn out as one thought they would.

As is common knowledge, the *Logic* contains the complete development of thought's determinations of being. For this reason it is the natural commentary on the opinions about objective being found in the forms of consciousness developed in the *Phenomenology*. The 'inverted world' is also to be found not only in the *Phenomenology* but in the *Logic* too and, specifically, in a form there such that the world in and for itself is the inversion of the world which appears. Obviously reversal is the basic meaning here, and nothing here could mislead one into thinking that a perversion of this world in any substantive sense is meant. Still it must not be forgotten that the *Encyclopaedia* (also the Heidelberg version) never makes use of the concept of the 'inverted world' at all and that the *Logic* develops the dialectic of this concept in a way not entirely consistent with the *Phenomenology*.

It seems as if Hegel might have recognized that the abstract juxtaposition of law and appearance as it is presented in the *Phenomenology*, i.e. as the opposition of the supersensible and sense world, is not at all in keeping with the meaning of law. In the *Phenomenology* he says of the tranquil realm of laws that, though to be sure it is beyond the perceived world, it is also present in the latter as its immediate, still image. However, he says in the same context in the *Logic*, 'The law is *not* beyond the appearance, but rather present in it immediately' (*L* II 127).⁷ Corresponding to this, the realm of laws no longer appears in the *Logic* as a *world*, supersensible or otherwise. 'The existing world is itself the realm of the laws.'

Of course the concept of law goes through the same stages here as in the *Phenomenology*. It is at first the mere basis of appearance and constitutes what stays the same in change – alongside of which the changing content of appearance continues to exist. We have a second step and a changed sense of law when the law itself presupposes the differences which constitute its content. In substance these stages correspond to the first and second supersensible worlds of the *Phenomenology*. But, significantly, only at this point is it said that the law in which the totality of appearance in itself is reflected has the character of totality, i.e. is a

world. In the *Logic*, namely, the tranquil realm of laws is not called the supersensible world: 'world' first appears in the 'world' which is inverted, i.e. totally reflected into itself and existing in and for itself, or what is called in the *Phenomenology* the *second supersensible world*.⁸ Only of the latter is it said expressly, 'Thus the appearance reflected into itself is now a world, which opens up as existing in and for itself above the appearing world.' It is also called the supersensible world (*L II* 131f.), and finally proves to be the 'inverted world'. Many of Hegel's examples of its inversion used here and in the *Phenomenology*, that is examples for the reversal of the supersensible world, are of no help to us in clarifying the general sense of *verkehr*t. North Pole and South Pole, positive and negative electricity, illustrate only that these relationships can be turned around and accordingly have a dialectical character (*Ph* 122; *L II* 134).

Still the question persists whether the phrase *verkehrte Welt*, as much as it might have the dialectical meaning of 'turned around', might nevertheless not also connote for Hegel something in line with a double sense of both inverted and perverted. I find a first indication that it does on page 122 of the *Phenomenology*. There one comes across the phrase, 'the law of a world which has opposite it a *verkehrte* supersensible world in which that which is scorned in the first is honoured in the second and vice versa'. The *verkehrte* world is thus a world in which everything is the reverse of the right world. Isn't that a familiar principle of literature, one which we call satire? One might be reminded in this regard of Plato's myths, in particular, of that in the *Statesman*, and of that master of English satire, Swift. Further, as is hinted in the figure of speech, 'that's a topsy-turvy world' (*verkehrte Welt*), meaning, for example, when servants play masters and masters, servants, this kind of reversal is illuminating in some way. What is found in the topsy-turvy world is not simply the contrary, the mere abstract opposite of the existent world. Rather this reversal in which everything is the opposite of itself makes visible in a kind of fun-house mirror the covert perversion of everything as we know it. If this is so, the topsy-turvy world would be the perversion of perversity. Being the perverted world backwards would amount to displaying the perversion of the latter *e contrario*. And that is certainly the point of all satire.

Such portrayal in a counterfactual possibility illumines for a moment a valid though unreal possibility in the established world as it stands. Indeed, this is precisely the purpose of satirical portrayal. As a form of statement, satirical inversion presupposes that the world will recognize in the reversal of itself its own perversion and thus come to see its true possibilities. Thus, it is the real world itself which splits apart into possibility and counter-possibility. In that the topsy-turvy world displays itself as reversed, it exhibits the wrongness of the established world as it stands.

Thus Hegel can justifiably say that this world is 'perverted (*verkehrt*) for itself, i.e. the perversion of itself', for it is no mere opposite. The true world, on the contrary, is both the truth projected as an ideal and its own perversion. Now if we keep in mind too that one of the main tasks of satire is to expose moral hypocrisy, i.e. the untruth of the world as it is supposed to be, the real trenchancy of *verkehrt* comes into view. The perversion of the true reality becomes visible behind its false front since in every instance satirical portrayal is the 'opposite in itself', whether this takes the form of exaggeration, innocence in contrast to hypocrisy, or whatever.⁹

It is in this sense that the *verkehrte* world is more than a direct opposite of what appears. Hegel states specifically (p. 122) that any view would be superficial in which 'the one world is the appearance; the other, the in-itself'. That is an opposition which the understanding supposes, but, in truth, it is not a matter here of the opposition of two worlds. Rather, it is the 'true, supersensible' world which contains both aspects and which divides itself into this opposition and thereby relates itself to itself.

This interpretation is particularly well documented by a recurring theme in Hegel, one of his favourites, which concerned him from his youth on. It is the problem of punishment and the forgiveness of sins, respectively – a problem which forced the young theologian, Hegel, beyond Kant's and Fichte's moral conception of the world. And, as a matter of fact, to my knowledge the idea of inversion-perversion is first found in Hegel's analysis of the problem of punishment.¹⁰ As the *Phenomenology* expressly states, it would be simplistic if one were to take punishment to be punishment only in appearance here, and, in reality or in another world, to be for the benefit of the criminal (p. 122). Only the abstract thinking of the understanding permits such talk of two worlds, and in this account of things there is no speculative reversal. The reversal which punishment implies is also not that of an actual counter-effect against which the wrongdoer seeks to defend himself. That would not be the position of justice at all but rather one of vindictiveness. Of course there is such an immediate law of retribution. But punishment has a meaning quite the opposite of this, and thus in Hegel it is called the 'inversion' of revenge. The individual seeking revenge holds himself to be the essential concern in opposition to the violator and seeks to restore his injured existence through destruction of the wrongdoer. But the concern in punishment is a quite different one, namely, with a violation of law. The counter-effect of the penalty is not a mere consequence of the violation; rather it belongs to the very essence of the misdeed. The misdeed as a crime demands punishment, which is to say that it does not have the immediacy of a simple action, but rather exists in the form of universality as crime *per se*. Thus Hegel is able to say that 'the inversion of it (*Verkehrtheit derselben*) is the punishment, i.e. that the crime becomes the opposite of what it was previously'. Punishment as inversion (*Verkehrtheit*) plainly

implies that punishment has an essential tie to the misdeed. Punishment is reasonable. The wrongdoer, as the reasonable man he wants to be, must turn against himself. In the *System of Ethicality* Hegel describes most impressively how this reversal comes to pass abstractly and ideally in the phenomenon of the bad conscience.¹¹ The wrongdoer's sensitivity to the division within himself may be anaesthetized again and again by the fear of punishment and also by his resistance to its impending reality, but it always returns in the ideal realm of conscience. That means that the wrongness of the deed shows up again and again as long as the punishment is 'called for'.

But then is it not necessary to take the turning around as it occurs here in relationship to punishment in the double sense which the full meaning of *Verkehrtheit* would imply? That the punishment is required as the necessary inversion of the misdeed means that it is recognized as that inversion. In it, therefore, the reconciliation of the law with the reality of crime opposed to it has occurred. If it is accepted and carried out and thus becomes actual punishment, it cancels itself out and correspondingly the self-destruction of the criminal ends and he is again one with himself. With his acceptance of his fate, the dichotomy prevailing in his existence – on the one hand the fear of punishment, on the other, the pangs of conscience – is eliminated. Here, too, one can say that the *verkehrte* world in which punishment 'is not that which damages and annihilates a man, but rather an extension of grace which preserves man's essence' is not simply an inversion of the abstract world where misdeed and punishment are opposed. It also reveals the perversity of that abstract world and elevates it to the 'higher sphere'¹² of fate and reconciliation with fate.

The further sequence of the forms of knowledge in the *Phenomenology* also makes it quite clear that *Verkehrung* and *Verkehrtheit* refer specifically and above all to what is good and evil, and, thus, that the meaning of *Verkehrt* is as much substantive as it is formal. In the chapter 'Culture and the realm of reality' the example used in the *Logic* for the *Verkehrte Welt* is made thematic, specifically the fact that 'what in phenomenal existence is evil, misfortune etc. is in and for itself good and fortunate' (*L* II 134). There it is said that,

When the upright consciousness, in the only way possible for it here, makes itself the guardian of the good and noble (i.e. of that which remains constant throughout all expression of itself), in order that the good and noble not be *linked* to the bad or *mixed* with it . . . this consciousness, though it thinks it is refuting the fact, has only restated in a trivial way . . . that the noble and good is essentially the inversion-perversion of itself, just as the bad is conversely the most admirable.

(*Ph* 373f.)

The good is the bad. One cannot take Hegel literally enough here. *Summum ius – summa iniuria* means that abstract justice is perversion of justice, that it not only leads to injustice but is itself ultimate injustice. We are far too accustomed to reading speculative statements as if there were a subject underlying them to which only different characteristics are attributed.¹³

At this point we return from our investigation of the dialectical sense of the 'inverted-perverted world' to our consideration of its function in the *Phenomenology's* train of thought. For my demonstration I have used the example of punishment and acceptance of fate, which came, to be sure, from 'another sphere' – one, however, which Hegel himself brings in as an illustration (*Ph* 122). But though the example is from 'another sphere', the structure and inner necessity of the dialectical development which concerns us is confirmed by it. We have no choice but to admit that the unsensed, supersensible world of the universal represents only an aspect of that which really is. The true reality is that of life, which moves itself within itself. Plato conceived of this as the *autokinoun*, Aristotle, as the essence of *phusis*. In the progression of the forms of knowing which the *Phenomenology* traverses, an enormous step is made here, where the being of what lives is grasped. What lives is not an instance of law or the composite result of laws bearing on each other; rather it is turned towards itself or it relates itself: it behaves. It is a self. There is an enduring truth here. For however far modern physiology might go in unlocking the secret of organic life, in knowing what lives we will never cease to make a turnabout in our thinking of that which, as the play of forces, lawfully determines organic nature: we will think of it, conversely, as the behaviour of the organism and 'understand' this organism as living. Though a Newton of the blade of grass may one day appear, in a deeper sense Kant will prove to be right. Our understanding of the world will not cease to judge 'teleologically'. For us, and not only for Hegel, the transition here is necessary, i.e. the progression to another, higher form of knowing as well as to a higher form of what is known. Indeed, in a decisive sense, that which we look upon as living we must view as a self. A 'self', however, means self-identity in all undifferentiatedness and all self-differentiation. The mode of being of what lives corresponds in this to the mode of being of the knowledge which understands what lives. For consciousness of what is as a self has the same structure of differentiation which is no differentiation. Thus the transition to self-consciousness has been essentially completed. We must now grasp that the 'inverted world' is in fact the real world – even if in the eyes of the idealist and mathematical physicist it is impure and therefore perverted since the abstract universality of the law and its pure instances are not present in it. That means that there is life in it which maintains itself in infinite change, in the continuing differentiation of itself from itself. And

once we have acknowledged this, the mediation which Hegel undertakes in his dialectical exposition of consciousness has been essentially achieved. It has been demonstrated, then, that consciousness is self-consciousness. In its knowing consciousness is actually more sure of this than of all conceptions of what is which have been mediated by the senses and the understanding. This certainty goes beyond all of these conceptions. For if it thinks of what is, as a self, that is as that which relates itself to itself, what it thinks of is intended as something which has the same certainty of itself which consciousness has. That is the true penetration into the interior of nature which alone is able to grasp the 'natural' in nature, i.e. its life. The living feels the living – it understands it from the inside as it understands itself as a self. The *autokinoun*, abstractly defined, is the act of the living self relating itself to itself. Expressed as knowing, it is the formula of idealism, $I = I$, self-consciousness.

Thus, the first part of the *Phenomenology* has achieved the goal of pointing out to consciousness that it contains the standpoint of idealism within itself. What leads Hegel beyond the standpoint of idealism, specifically the concept of reason which transcends the subjectivity of the self and which is realized as spirit, has been given a foundation in this first section. Realization of that concept even now exceeds our grasp.

Notes

1 *Verkehrte Welt*. Any single choice in translating *verkehrrt* here is unsatisfactory. For Gadamer's analysis turns on the double sense of the world in German – on the one hand, the value-free sense of inverted, backwards, upside down, inside out, etc., and on the other, the evaluative sense of perverted, distorted. In this second sense the thing which is *verkehrrt* appears as a caricature of itself. (Trans.)

2 See R. Wiehl, *Hegel-Studien*, Supplement 3, 1964, pp. 103ff.

3 Gadamer is referring here to the development in the first chapters of the *Phenomenology*, which take consciousness from immediate dependency on sense data (sense, certainty) through more and more mediated forms of knowledge (perception, understanding). The step referred to here is that from knowing a thing with qualities, for example, salt with the qualities of white, hard, saline taste etc., to knowing a universe of objects standing in force relationships to each other. In Hegel's analysis that is the transition from perception to understanding. (Trans.)

4 See Hegel's account of Plato's philosophy in his lectures (XIV 169ff.).

5 The Marburg school too could not stand pat on this construction of the object through laws. That is demonstrated not only by the later Natorp's concept of *das Urkonkrete* (the originally and ultimately concrete) but also by his understanding of the later Plato, which comes so close to Hegel's. This relationship has been pursued by R. Wiehl in his as yet unpublished studies on Platonic and Hegelian dialectic.

6 This would seem to be the place to point to the ambivalence in Hegel's understanding of Plato. On the one hand, he views him with the eyes of Aristotle:

'Plato expresses the essence rather more as the universal and thus the element of reality seems to be missing in him.' On the other hand, he recognizes in Plato's dialectic this 'negative principle' (i.e. of reality) when he says that principle essentially touches upon reality 'if it is the unity of what is opposed' (XIV 322).

7 My italics.

8 My italics.

9 The literary use of the concept of the 'inverted world' in the satire of the late Middle Ages is set forth *in extenso* by Karl Rosenkranz in his *Geschichte der deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter*, Halle, 1830, pp. 586–94. See also Klaus Lazarewicz, *Vekehrte Welt. Vorstudien zu einer Geschichte der deutschen Satire*, Tübingen, 1963, which to be sure does not trace the history of this turn of speech. Rather more is to be found in Alfred Liede, *Dichtung als Spiel. Unsinnspoesie an den Grenzen der Sprache*, Berlin, 1963, vol. 2, pp. 40 ff., and some evidence for my thesis from the seventeenth century, in Jean Rousset, *La littérature de l'âge baroque*, Paris, 1963, pp. 26–8, in particular, p. 27, according to which it would appear that the folk motif of a turnabout into the absurd only gradually assumes the character of a statement of the truth in the sense of satire.

10 Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. H. Nohl, Tübingen, 1907, p. 280.

11 Hegel, *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. George Lasson, Leipzig, 1913, p. 453.

12 Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, p. 279.

13 In passing it should be mentioned that ordinary German usage quite confidently distinguishes between *falsch* (false) and *verkehrt* (inverted or backwards). Of course an answer which inverts things or gets them twisted is not correct, but the elements of truth are recognizable in it and only need to be put right. A false answer, on the other hand, contains no such possibility of making it right. Thus, for example, the information someone gives you can be called *falsch* if it is deliberately given with the intent of deceiving – but in such a case it could not be called *verkehrt*. For an answer which is *verkehrt* is always one which was meant to be correct and which turned out to be false. In this sense too the *malum* is the *conversio boni*.

Hegel's 'inverted world'

Joseph C. Flay

The 'inverted world' occupies a most crucial position in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: it serves to carry us forward from the phenomenological examination of appearing consciousness as pure consciousness, i.e. as pure intentional consciousness over against a pure intended world, into the examination of appearing consciousness as self-consciousness. Its importance cannot be overestimated; for such a movement in the interpretation of the meaning and structure of consciousness is central to Hegel's philosophy. We are moved from an 'epistemological' and 'intellectualistic' consideration of consciousness as a 'somewhat' which is different in kind from that which is its object to an examination of consciousness as a living, internal involvement in the world such that the 'knower' cannot be treated as a mere spectator. Yet it has remained for the most part one of the most obscure passages in the *Phenomenology*, a state of affairs which is usually attributed to the inherent absurdity of the position outlined in this passage. A *verkehrte Welt* is, after all, a topsy-turvy, absurd world.¹

I shall suggest in this paper that this 'inverted world' is exactly that: an absurd position. This is not to say that it is to be ignored or condemned as 'fantastic', but rather that its importance and intelligibility lay in its very absurdity, in its *appearance* as an unintelligible inversion of what previously was taken to constitute the intelligibility of the world of appearance. More precisely, I shall suggest that this inverted world is a misunderstanding and perversion of the conclusion to which we should have been brought at this point in the *Phenomenology*. It is Hegel's intention, underscored by the conditional rather than indicative construction of this section, that we see this misunderstanding as a misunderstanding. When on the other hand the inversion is correctly understood, it brings to the phenomenological 'we' undergoing the *Bildungsprozess* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* the explicit realization that consciousness is

not merely finite intentionality, but as such is infinite. *Consciousness is self-consciousness, consciousness limited by nothing but itself.*

I

Any attempt to interpret a single section of a philosophical work is beset with difficulties. In the case of Hegel, it verges on insanity. An interpretation of the 'inverted world' cannot, therefore, simply stand on its own, but must include in its structure an interpretation of the whole work of which it is a part. The limits of a short essay preclude such an interpretation of the whole. Nevertheless, I shall attempt an adumbrated version of an interpretation which hopefully will suffice as a groundwork for an interpretation of the section of the *Phenomenology* at hand.

The 'inverted world' stands near the end of the examination of understanding-consciousness and its 'object', force. It completes the analysis of consciousness seen as intending consciousness over against the world. This examination of consciousness as consciousness, in turn, stands at the beginning of the examination of spirit which manifests itself concretely as world history and as the true substance of the individual. The latter constitute the ultimate subject matter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What is important for us, then, is to understand what part the analysis of understanding-consciousness and force plays in the whole of the articulation and analysis of spirit.

The task of the *Phenomenology* is clearly laid out both in its Preface and in the Introduction to *The Science of Logic*. It is to display the becoming of science in general, a becoming which is a journey from immediate spirit or sensible, common-sense consciousness to authentic knowledge or philosophical science. The former is for-itself spiritless: it is in-itself its own substance, but is not aware of itself as substance or of this substance as subject. The latter, authentic knowledge, is for-itself its own pure concept. It has come to be at home with itself, having achieved access to being, to the primordial ground of what-is as such.² It is necessary to display this becoming primarily because ordinary or natural consciousness is a being in the world for which philosophy makes no sense. But equally this display is required because to be science, to be the absolute grasping of absolute knowledge, the true domain of this science must be existentially embraced, casting aside the bonds of natural consciousness.³ Philosophical science (and this is the only science of which we here speak) is an absurdity, an unnatural inversion (*ein Verkehrtes*), from the vantage point of immediate spirit or natural consciousness. Thus, the whole task of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to display and clarify the intelligibility of what appears at first to be an absurdity.⁴ Hegel's remarks here in the Preface demonstrate his view of the necessity

for a discussion of inversion and inverted worlds and offer a clue to its place in the work, namely, at that point at which natural consciousness is forced first to give up its 'natural' world. This is at the point where the analysis of consciousness becomes the analysis of self-consciousness.

The means by which this task is to be accomplished is equally clearly indicated. We must undertake a journey of doubt and despair⁵ upon which we pass through our own substance and world spirit as it has come to be.⁶ In less figurative language, we are to place our own existence (*Dasein*) before ourselves, no longer simply to undergo it but now to become explicitly aware of what this undergoing entails in both structure and content. In short, we prepare ourselves for philosophical science by becoming explicitly aware of the content and structure of what we nesciently undergo in the many modes through and in which we maintain ourselves in and towards the world. In the process of this education we become aware of the mediation and negativity entailed in any mode of being in the world. This education, then, is a journey of doubt and despair, not because we find that all modes except absolute knowing are false modes *à fond*, but rather because actuality is revealed as not immediately accessible in any one mode of being in and towards the world.

One of the many modes is that of understanding-consciousness. Understanding is a mode in which man faces what-is, not as sensuous, material being, but as categories or *Gedankendinge*. These *Gedankendinge* are intended as constituting the unconditioned universal, the absolute ground (*Urgrund*) of what appears, and to constitute it such that the distinctions which are immediately manifest in the various modes of perception and action are unconditionally grounded and united within an 'objective' realm of 'Ideas'. Understanding is to be the self-grounding knowledge of the supersensible ground of the sensible and is therefore an attempt to hold the 'really real' before a knowing intentional consciousness.

The phenomenological analysis of understanding-consciousness grows out of the failure of perceptual-consciousness to ground itself. Perception and the extended world which is its 'object' show themselves as a revelation of a manifold of unities, spread out in experience within the matrix of perceiver-perceived. But there is also present in this manifold a unity which is an unconditioned universal, a spatio-temporal unity which 'holds together' the manifold, extended 'this-here-now'. When common sense (or a philosophical position based on the postulates that perception is knowledge and that the essence of what-is is extension) attempts to explicate this its own unity, it falls either into a mere positing of this unity as a 'given' or as axiomatic, or into a species of deception which equivocates on the relationship between the various aspects of the one and the many experienced within the perceptual world. Perception, to be sure, has successfully grasped the 'this-here-now' which eluded immediate

sense awareness, and therefore has 'truly taken' the objects of its world. But such a taking or having of what-is falls short of its own demands for knowledge; for there remains a *je ne sais quoi* which marks perceptual knowledge and empirical philosophy as abstract rather than concrete knowledge. Understanding-consciousness purports to overcome this lacuna with its explicit recognition of and attendance to *Gedankendinge* as the constituting factors of ultimate reality.

Thus the purpose of the phenomenological analysis of understanding-consciousness is to ascertain whether and to what extent such a mode of being in and towards the world is capable of being absolute, unconditional knowledge which comprehends the absolute, unconditional 'object'. The course of the inquiry will reveal the negative conclusion that understanding fails in its task to be absolute knowledge because, like the whole of the mode of pure consciousness, it presupposes the subject-object dualism and the primacy of the given. The positive conclusion, manifested by a discussion of the inverted, absurd world, will be a dialectical recognition of the truth that consciousness is self-consciousness, i.e. that consciousness is an involvement in and towards the world in which subject and object mutually implicate each other as a duality *which arises out of an original unity* rather than as a pre-given dualism which then has to be unified.

With this brief outline of the problematic and thematic out of which and for which the consideration of understanding arises, we can now turn to the question of the structure of the examination of this mode of consciousness which leads to the consideration of an inverted, absurd world.

II

In the process of the examination of understanding we find a movement embracing two fundamental stances. The first is a stance or mode of knowing and being in which the essence of what-is is to be found in a supersensible realm transcendent to the knower and constituted as a kingdom of laws which remains static and unaffected by change. This arises simply as a demand of the dialectic of perceptual appearance. Appearance itself stands 'between' the knower and the intelligible reality in various ways. Ultimately appearance is constituted as extension and motion and the *mundus intelligibilis* as non-sensuous force (*Kraft*). This is the first supersensible world and entails the denial of extension and of the perpetual world as a matrix of this-here-now as ultimate reality.⁷

Now, instead of vacillating between perceiver and perceived or between the various manifestations of oneness and manyness, we attempt to hold the totality of the process of this world 'as at once inseparably united in

regard to the process of grasping the truth'.⁸ We have as our phenomenological object a stance of intentional consciousness which holds before itself the metaphysical, non-sensuous 'inner of things' constituted as force.⁹ We are examining a mode of consciousness which attempts to comprehend what-is as such and in totality in its *a priori*, non-sensuous ground.

This first supersensible world, however, fails to be an unconditioned, but instead involves us with a distinction between the inner and outer of 'things', a distinction between appearance and reality which itself calls for a ground. On the one hand, appearance is constituted by the play or manifestation of forces and consequently is a realm of change. This is in fact the same world which perceptual consciousness holds before itself. On the other hand, reality is constituted by an objective realm of law, a kingdom of laws which ground appearance and the changing, but which is itself unaffected by change.

The question arises: wherein lies the necessity of these laws in respect to the world of appearance? If we re-examine what such a consciousness is undergoing we find that it is involved in a process of explanation (*Erklären*), duplicating the world of appearance, but placing this world under the rubric of unchangeable law. This first supersensible world is 'the immediate and unmediated raising of the perceptual world into the element or realm of universality; it has its necessary counterpart and antitype in the perceptual world which still retains for itself the principle of alteration and succession'.¹⁰

In short, understanding in this stance does nothing but repeat the constitution of the manifold or the world of appearance under the form of universality and necessity. It involves itself in a tautological process, and 'is an explanation [*Erklären*] which not only clarifies nothing [*nichts erklärt*], but rather is so clear [*klar*] that, when it prepares to say something different from that already said, it says nothing and merely repeats again the same thing'.¹¹ The 'clearing' that is made is the same as that which is to be cleared. But there is here a positive result as well: 'Through the process nothing new arises in reference to the state of affairs itself, but the process is of importance only as a process of the understanding'.¹² With this realization consciousness 'has crossed over from the inner as object to the other side within understanding'.¹³

The second supersensible world, and the second major stance for understanding-consciousness, has arisen for us. The essence of what-is is now to be found in the understanding itself, constituted such that its laws embrace change and distinction within unchanging universality. Appearance itself is taken up into this realm, or better, has already been taken up into it, since the phenomenological analysis of perception yielded the truth of perception as an indissoluble matrix of perceiver-perceived.

The 'collapse into the one side' now introduces the unconditioned

universal, the inner for knowledge and being, as appearance. 'The supersensible is the sensible and the perceptual posited as they are in truth: the truth of the sensible and perceptual is, however, to be appearance. The supersensible is therefore appearance as appearance.'¹⁴ A distinction is here made between appearance as *Schein*, as things appearing, and, on the other hand, appearance as appearance: *Erscheinung als Erscheinung*. Hegel has articulated this distinction and its importance for us here most clearly in the Preface: 'Appearance is the process of arising into being and passing away, a process which itself does not arise and does not pass away, but which is in-itself and constitutes the actuality and the process of the life of truth.'¹⁵ That is to say, appearances appearing constitute the positivity of appearance itself which it turn is their ground as process itself. Appearance, the self-containment of coming into being and passing away, is the truth which we have named the unconditioned universal. Appearance as such, then, and the second supersensible world are one and the same.

There now follows a rather closely packed discussion of the result of the movement to this second supersensible world. From the realization that explanation is nothing but the explanation of appearances whose ground lies in understanding itself (that is to say, in being in and towards the world of appearance in this mode of consciousness), we come to the realization that the realm of law (non-change, permanence through manyness) and the realm of change (appearances, manifold occurrences) are one and the same for consciousness. Yet at the same time the distinction is maintained between that which happens (the appearing of appearances) and the laws, rules and principles as well as the ground for that which happens.

Understanding thus learns that it is a law for the sphere of appearance for distinctions to come about which are no distinctions. In other words, it learns that what is self-same or like-named is repelled from itself; and precisely therefore that the distinctions or differences are only such that they are in truth no distinctions and are transcended yet preserved in the whole: or that what is not self-same or what is unlike-named is absorbed.¹⁶

It is at this point where we reach a contradictory state of affairs and the discussion of the 'inverted world' arises. The law of appearance itself seemingly destroys the sought-after unity and stability which is to constitute lawfulness. Laws as well as the concept of law itself embrace an identity in difference and a difference in identity.

III

Before proceeding now to a discussion of this 'inverted world', I should like to lay some groundwork with a glance towards Kant. I suggest that in the movement from the first to the second supersensible world (and their respective consciousnesses) we have undergone, by means of a dialectical critique of the first supersensible world, a phenomenological counterpart to Kant's Copernican revolution and the proofs for its necessity which are contained in the transcendental deduction.¹⁷ The law expressed by the understanding is to be the law of the inner of things, i.e. of the ground and essence of appearances. In so far as consciousness is concerned, the realm of appearance as it stands for perceptual consciousness cannot ground itself. But we have also found, in the discussion of the first supersensible world (which both Kant and Hegel ascribe to Leibniz), that a supersensible beyond cannot ground appearance either, but is only the *immediate* taking up of what occurs sensuously and perceptually into an intelligible, non-sensuous world. Yet either there must be an intelligible, unconditioned realm or we are abandoned to the ungrounded 'knowledge' of the perceptual world. If the latter is the case, our inquiry is at an end and, while we certainly have 'natural knowledge' and can and do operate with concepts of necessity and laws, we are none the less condemned to the philosophical scepticism of Hume.

Kant's 'transcendental turn' had arisen from the same dilemma and he proffered his alternative to the positions of Hume and Leibniz. With the transcendental deduction he laid the groundwork for the ultimate principle of understanding: 'Every object stands under the necessary conditions of synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in a possible experience.'¹⁸ The pure principles of understanding then articulate the meaning of this ultimate principle and establish Kant's version of the law of appearance.

That there should be principles at all is entirely due to pure understanding. Not only is it the faculty of rules in respect to that which happens, but is itself the source of principles according to which everything that can be presented to us as an object must conform to rules.¹⁹

That is to say: through the principles of the understanding the forms of the manifold as manifold and the structure and very possibility of this manifold as objective experience (empirically real and transcendently ideal) are brought together in such a way that both the stability and the instability of the world are grounded in understanding itself. Neither necessity nor contingency, thought nor intuition, spontaneity nor givenness are prior to the other; each without the other is abstract, and it is this that the analytic of principles rectifies. Thus the unity of the spatio-

temporal world and the constituting syntheses of knowledge yield the law of appearance which we must now repeat:

The highest principle of all synthetic judgments is therefore this: every object stands under the necessary conditions of synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in a possible experience.²⁰

Kant has now established the ground for both knower and known. But in spite of the fact that 'we have now not merely explored the territory of pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it, but have also measured its extent, and assigned to everything in its rightful place',²¹ Kant finds it necessary to follow with a twofold discussion: namely, that of 'The Ground of the Distinction of All Objects in General into Phenomena and Noumena' and 'The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection'. A question arises here as to why this analysis occurs between the 'Transcendental Analytic' and the 'Transcendental Dialectic'. That is, why, if we have so completely articulated and established the law of appearance, can we not simply proceed to expose the nature of the misuse of pure reason and explicitly attack previous metaphysics as a 'logic of illusion'?

Kant's answer to this question is the following. He argues that although we have indeed 'assigned everything its rightful place', and are now prepared to 'explore the sea of illusion surrounding the island of truth',²² in order to help strengthen our conviction we might first give a summary statement of what has been explored and *demonstrate that we are under compulsion to accept its findings*. This demonstration can reveal to us 'by what title we possess even this domain, and can consider ourselves as secured against all opposing claims'.²³ This is accomplished, not by an actual summary of the 'Transcendental Analytic', but (1) by underscoring the distinction between phenomena and noumena and marking the difference between this distinction and that offered by Leibniz between the *mundus intelligibilis et mundus sensibilis* and (2) by discussing an amphiboly which arises when understanding does not make this distinction in its own employment.²⁴ In other words, the reason for the insertion of these two sections is *to articulate the difference between the intelligibility of the world in Kant's own doctrine of experience and that of the mundus intelligibilis of Leibniz*.

Kant argues here that if the critique contained in the 'Transcendental Dialectic' and the exposition offered in the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method' is to be correctly understood, we must comprehend how and to what extent the critical system differs from conventional metaphysics: namely, that there is in critical-transcendental philosophy no external distinction between worlds or between aspects of the same world. While 'Leibniz erected an *intellectual system of the world*, or rather believed that he could obtain knowledge of the inner of things by comparing all

objects merely with the understanding and with the sundered, formal concepts of its thought', leaving 'sensibility . . . only a confused mode of representation . . . of the *thing in itself*',²⁵ Kant himself has articulated an 'intelligible world' in which 'the condition of the objective employment of all our concepts of understanding is merely the mode of our sensible intuition, by which objects are given to us'²⁶ as a manifold. Previous metaphysics were involved in 'a transcendental amphiboly, that is a confounding of an object of pure understanding with appearance'.²⁷

What is clarified here is that the concept as concept of the understanding is indeed the same as the inner of things; but what 'inner' means here is not the same as what it meant for Leibniz and his predecessors. The distinction between inner and outer, appearance and supersensible, is no longer a distinction in so far as knowledge is concerned *in its own appearing*. My object is no longer a supersensible, merely intelligible 'beyond' which is a transcendent intended by intentional consciousness; rather understanding itself is the totality of the ground of the object as object. Understanding is not subjective, but 'embraces' the subjective-objective distinction. To be sure, Kant does not offer Hegel's move from consciousness to self-consciousness, but it can be argued that he laid the ground for his move.²⁸

In dealing with appearances I shall always be obliged to compare my concepts, in transcendental reflection, solely under the conditions of sensibility; and accordingly space and time will not be determinations of things-in-themselves but of appearances. What the things-in-themselves may be I do not know, nor do I need to know, since a thing can never come before me except in appearance.²⁹

Given the explicit articulation of this difference Kant can now proceed to his arguments concerning the nature of the mistaken transcendent application of understanding-consciousness. The radical turn from transcendence to immanence has been made the focal point, underscoring and justifying his claim for a 'Copernican revolution'.

IV

I have suggested that we can gain some comprehension of Hegel's treatment of understanding by turning our attention to Kant. In particular, I have suggested that the dialectical movement from the first supersensible world to the second can be seen as Hegel's version of Kant's rejection of both Leibniz and Hume and his articulation of his own transcendental position. I have now offered an interpretation of the meaning and substance of the two sections which separate the doctrine of principles from

the transcendental dialectic: namely, that it was important for Kant to underscore and argue for the difference between his own 'transcendental' position and that metaphysics which constituted previous attempts to offer the unconditioned. Finally, I have suggested that this 'clarification' on the part of Kant lays the ground for the argument that consciousness is self-consciousness.

My purpose for discussing Kant's phenomena-noumena distinction and his discussion of the amphiboly was to allow the following further suggestion: *Hegel has made the same clarification in his discussion of the inverted world that Kant made in these last sections.*

At the point at which we left the *Phenomenology* the contradictions produced by the law of appearance were introduced. If I may repeat this passage:

Understanding thus learns that it is a law for the sphere of appearance for distinctions to come about which are no distinctions. In other words, it learns that what is self-same or like-named is repelled from itself; and precisely therefore that the distinctions or differences are only such that they are in truth no distinctions and are transcended yet preserved in the whole; or that what is not self-same or what is unlike-named is absorbed.³⁰

A second law (and second supersensible world, since understanding now gives the law of the inner world) now arises in which what was 'formerly characteristic of the sphere of appearance, and lay outside the inner world, [finds] its way into the region of the supersensible itself'.³¹ The *mundus intelligibilis et mundus sensibilis*, the unchanging and the changing, the one and the many, the identical and the different are now of one and the same domain. Yet this domain is identified as the inner of things, the ground of appearance itself. And this world first *appears* as a second supersensible world, with a second law of appearance which is both absurd and the inversion of the first. The reason for the inversion is that all distinction is internal distinction: the one is many and the many are one.

It is at this point that a demand is made that 'thoughtlessness bring both laws together and become aware of their opposition. To be sure the second is also a law or an inner, self-like Being, but a self-likeness rather of unlikeness, a constancy of inconstancy'.³² That is to say: 'we cannot thoughtlessly continue to interpret this second supersensible world as the first was interpreted; they are generically different. *The discussion of the second world and its law as inverted and absurd is the articulation of this distinction*, demonstrating what *would* be the case *were* this second domain of intelligibility, containing contradiction, truly a second, supersensible world standing over against either appearance or the first super-

sensible world. The absurdity is brought to a halt when we are reminded of the actual nature of this second law of appearance: to wit, that the 'distinctions between inner and outer, appearance and the supersensible, as two *actualities*, is no longer a distinction which is here present'.³³

The task to be accomplished is the same as Kant's discussed above. The difference is that it is carried out, not by directly insisting upon the difference as such, but by drawing absurd conclusions which follow if and when the distinction between the old metaphysics (the first supersensible) and the new position (the second supersensible) is not made. Without the distinction absurd contradictions follow and the 'second supersensible world' in fact only serves to make unintelligible the world of appearance which it purports to ground and make intelligible. Sour becomes sweet, North Pole becomes South Pole etc., because the changing and the unchanging are of the same domain and at the same time predominantly law, i.e. unchanging necessity. In so far as the changeable perceptual world is this second, supersensible, lawful world, instability, change and difference are the same as stability, changelessness and identity. Differences and therefore identities become meaningless. The law of this second supersensible domain, as here misinterpreted, is in fact lawlessness.

When, however, the distinction is made as it really now is – namely, as internal distinction – the supersensible as supersensible disappears. It is *not* the case that sweet is sour, North Pole is South Pole etc., but rather that they determine each other, necessarily standing in a self-defining relationship. This is the law of appearance, the dialectical constitution of internal definition and determination. Law is within the realm of appearance itself and thus changing appearance is unconditioned or self-conditioned.

Thus the supersensible world, which is the inverted, absurd world, simultaneously overreaches the other supersensible and has the other in itself; the supersensible world is for itself inverted, that is, is the inverted of itself. It is itself and its opposed world within one unity. Only thus is difference as inner difference, or difference in reference to itself: it is *infinity*.³⁴

The *Gedankendinge* are within experience itself, constituting the world as it is in experience, and in particular in explanation. Understanding-consciousness is therefore infinite because limited by nothing but itself. That is to say: since the distinction between the manifold of perception, extended and in flux, and the lawful, ordered understanding is itself only a distinction within consciousness itself, there is no supersensible and transcendent some-what over against consciousness itself. As Kant had also said, but Hegel now gives its strongest interpretation: 'What the things-in-themselves may be I do not know, nor do I need to know, since

a thing can never come before me except in appearance.³⁵ For Hegel, the structure and meaning of the intending (*Meinen*) and the 'this' (*Dieses*) with which the analysis of consciousness began is wholly within consciousness. To say now that consciousness is aware of itself as inverted is to say that it is aware of the immanent transcendence and thus can come, phenomenologically, to the awareness of being self-awareness, self-consciousness, *Selbst-bewußt-sein*.

Thus, the inverted, absurd world remains inverted and absurd from the point of view of a pure attitude of consciousness where the knower stands over against and transcendent to the objective appearance and the supersensible which grounds this appearance. But when the limits of consciousness are explicitly brought before us, when there is awareness of an inversion of this duality and a collapse of the knowing and the knowable into experience as such, then the absurdity evaporates. With this 'evaporation of the absurdity' we have made that crucial step-forward towards absolute knowledge and philosophical science: we have brought into radical question the common-sense, natural attitude (which, as Hegel has already pointed out in the Preface, holds science to be absurd and inverted) that objects and truth are *an sich* and other than consciousness.³⁶ We have laid the ground for the principle of idealism which is embraced by all true philosophy.³⁷

V

At this point, of course, the parallel with Kant begins to disintegrate. And well it should; for if Kant had pursued the argument further, the history of German idealism would have been different. Hegel's argument to the end of this section on understanding rounds out the transition to the announcement that consciousness is self-consciousness. We cannot follow this out here.

I hope only to have thrown some light on a difficult and obscure but crucial passage in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I have suggested and tried to show that this obscurity lay in its absurdity and that this absurdity is the result of a dialectical argument in which, by means of a *reductio* argument based upon the suppression of a vital difference, Hegel shows two things: (1) a misinterpretation in which the immanence of difference in a transcendental philosophy is treated as a transcendence and (2) the correct understanding of this position from which we are led to the principle of idealism. Both are demonstrated by arguing that the distinction between appearance and a supersensible unconditioned is a mistake. I have suggested that a backward glance at Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena and the discussion of the amphibolies of reflection would help to make Hegel's intention clear.

Notes

1 Jean Hyppolite and Hans-Georg Gadamer must be excepted here. Both have made sustained attempts to make sense of this passage, the former in a reference to Christian doctrine and the latter in a reference to Plato and Aristotle. My own attempt here to comprehend this passage in reference to Kant and Leibniz does not 'disagree' with either interpretation, but rather supplements these interpretations. See Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (Paris, 1946), Vol. I, pp. 131–6; Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Die verkehrte Welt', *Hegel-Studien*, Annex 3, pp. 135–54 [translation reprinted above, pp. 131–47. R.S.].

2 *PhG*, Meiner ed. (1952), p. 26. Cf. *Logik*, Meiner ed. (1963), pp. 29–31, pp. 52–3.

3 *PhG*, p. 561.

4 *ibid.*, pp. 25–6.

5 *ibid.*, p. 67.

6 *ibid.*, pp. 27–8.

7 Cf. Leibniz' 'New System of Nature and of the Communication of Substances', sects 2 and 3. That Hegel is here calling on Leibniz as an example of this stance of understanding could be shown by a careful analysis of the argument in the beginning of this section on extension and force. See also Hegel's remarks on Leibniz in *Geschichte der Philosophie*. As will be seen below, I am attempting to understand this chapter in the *Phenomenology* as a discussion between Kant and Leibniz.

8 *PhG*, p. 106. Cf. Leibniz' discussion of perception and apperception in the *Monadology* and *New Essays on the Understanding*, Bk IV, chaps 1–4.

9 *PhG*, p. 106.

10 *ibid.*, p. 121. Cf. Kant, *K.r.V.*, A271, B327. There is here strong evidence for indicating Leibniz and Kant as paradigms for Hegel's analysis.

11 *PhG*, pp 119–20.

12 *ibid.*, p. 120. Italics mine.

13 *ibid.*

14 *ibid.*, p. 113.

15 *ibid.*, p. 39.

16 *ibid.*, p. 120.

17 It might be added here further that such a suggestion is possible as attested to by Hegel himself in the Preface, namely, that we are to re-traverse the path already taken by world spirit in such a way that we make it our own. See *PhG*, pp. 26–8. Leibniz and Kant play a major role in the introductory chapters of the *Encyclopaedia*, where, in more didactic form, a preparation for the *Logic* is made. My suggestion that it is Leibniz and Kant who are here being 'repossessed' can be established only by evidence which I hope will become manifest in the remainder of this paper.

18 *K.r.V.*, A158, B197.

19 *ibid.*, A158–9, B197–8.

20 *ibid.*, A158, B197.

21 *ibid.*, A235, B294.

22 *ibid.*, A235–6, B295.

23 *ibid.*, A236, B295.

24 In both sections it is Leibniz to whom Kant opposes himself.

25 *K.r.V.*, A270, B326.

26 *ibid.*, A286, B342.

27 *ibid.*, A270, B326.

28 See his discussion of self-consciousness at B139. Hegel, at any rate, saw Kant in this way. See his *Geschichte der Philosophie*.

29 *K.r.V.*, A276–7, B332–33.

30 *PhG*, p. 120.

31 *ibid.*

32 *ibid.*, p. 121.

33 *ibid.*, p. 123. Italics mine.

34 *ibid.*, p. 124.

35 *K.r.V.*, A276–7, B332–3.

36 *PhG*, p. 133.

37 *Logik*, I, pp. 145–6.

Notes on Hegel's 'lordship and bondage'

George Armstrong Kelly

What is living in Hegel? The mid-twentieth century is prone to answer: his sense of the collective, his notion of a politically structured people as the unit of historical meaning, his grounding of right in intersubjective purpose, his penetrating explorations of psychological and sociological conflict. Both admirers and hostile critics fasten on these categories, because, as issues of debate, they are not only living in Hegel, but living in our time.

Thus Hegel's philosophy did not, as it were, merely paint 'gray on gray'. Not surprisingly, however, contemporary interest in this 'ultimate philosophy' is due chiefly to the suggestive expansion of its insights, rather than to any desire for systematic reconstruction. In a discretionary way, Hegelian problems and patterns have gained a new lease in the fields of social and religious thought and among those for whom classical political theory is not a dead exercise. One might say that Hegel remains vital because he continues to raise polemical questions. When a giant structure of human speculation is superseded – a fate which some feel, wrongly I think, that Hegel tacitly acknowledged for his own philosophy – but survives *in membris disjectis*, anthologies tend to be compiled for partisan purposes. Karl Löwith reminds us that this was the destiny of the fragile Hegelian balance in the hands of the philosopher's immediate disciples.¹ The last generation has seen a renewal of this *Kulturkampf*, but now on the far side of total war, Marxism, and religious crisis. The opposition of 'What did Hegel mean?' and 'What does Hegel mean for us?' is posed and reposed. I personally feel – as a historian of ideas – that some intellectual mischief is caused by the failure to raise the two questions in mutual rapport.

An important case in point would be the characteristic modern treatment of Hegel's famous scenario of 'lordship and bondage', the account of liberation through work which so deeply affected the young Karl Marx

in his 1844 manuscripts.² This tableau is most fully developed in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* of 1807, but is also covered more tersely in the *Propädeutik* (1808–16) and the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (editions 1817, 1827, 1830 and 1840–5), essayed in rudimentary form in both series of Jena lectures on the philosophy of spirit (1803–4 and 1805–6), alluded to in the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821) and, according to some interpreters, foreshadowed in the discussion of Hebrew religion in the so-called early theological essays.³ As a form of consciousness, lordship and bondage was continuously indispensable to Hegel's dialectical deduction of the formation of subjective mind and had occupied him from his earliest attempts to construct a system. Since there can be no quarrel about the centrality of this philosophical 'moment', it becomes essential to grasp its precise meaning and content.

A full précis of this much-admired passage will be dispensed with here. I have no particular dispute with, for example, Hyppolite's treatment, as far as it goes.⁴ However, many modern readings – inspired by Kojève's artful exegesis in his *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*⁵ – tend to distort lordship and bondage in the total Hegelian structure. Though every student of Hegel is deeply enriched by Kojève, this experience is not without its dangers. In the present case, the difficulty seems to me chiefly twofold: the subjectivity of the scenario is largely ignored, and the master-slave relationship is made an unqualified device for clarifying the progress of human history. The one tendency leads to a unilaterally 'social' interpretation of the *Phenomenology*, particularly the section on *Selbstbewusstsein*;⁶ the other easily gathers in anachronistic overtones of the Marxian class struggle.

The regulative idea of lordship and bondage runs like a golden thread through much of Kojève's analysis. His general introduction stresses the point:

The Slave alone is able to transcend the World as it is (in thrall to the Master) and not perish. The Slave alone is able to transform the World that forms him and fixes him in bondage, and to create a World of his own making where he will be free.⁷

In a later passage, Kojève asserts that he has given an 'anthropological' reading of the *Phenomenology*, and that Hegel intends a 'metaphysical' dimension as well, the two currents being necessarily syncretized in the final chapter on Absolute Knowledge.⁸ A footnote here seems to clarify Kojève's resolve to treat equally of the interior and exterior relations of the consciousness (as was surely Hegel's purpose) under the anthropological notion. But, in fact, although both exterior (political) and interior (psychological) consequences are acknowledged, he sees the master-slave

relationship purely as an external confrontation. For Kojève this motif persists in various ascending forms until the Hegelian end of time. Thus: Work and Struggle = Freedom = Time = History = Transience = Nothing = Man. In more humble language, the future belongs to the once-terrorized producer, progressively liberated by the spiritualized quality of his own labour, not to the seemingly omnipotent consumer, who treats both the servant and his product as mere dead things. Effectively, the slave releases history from nature, and it is the slave's satisfaction that will bring history to a close. Thus, while retaining the Hegelian primacy of ideas over things, Kojève, like Marx, tends to regard forms of servitude as epiphenomena of the relations of production.

As students of the career of philosophical ideas know, Kojève's lectures on Hegel have had an enormous impact. To take a recent example, the British scholar John Plamenatz, in his two volumes on European political thought, has, with full acknowledgement, provided a Kojève-Hyppolite reading in his chapter on the *Phenomenology*. He casts lordship and bondage entirely at the inter-personal level, and his conclusion reflects the familiar line of argument: 'the future is with the slave. It is his destiny to create the community in which everyone accords recognition to everyone else, the community in which Spirit attains its end and achieves satisfaction.'⁹ But where did Hegel ever say this? Plamenatz's criticisms of Hegel (via the French commentaries) are grounded in the same analysis. How, he inquires, can one explore the possibilities of community in terms of one master and one slave, as Hegel appears to do? How can one refuse to see that manual toil is not the exclusively dignified form of labour; is there not also managerial toil?¹⁰ Although Hegel is sometimes no easier to vindicate than he is to understand, this type of question will not seem so pressing if lordship and bondage is given a more balanced, more 'phenomenological' interpretation. By 'phenomenological' I mean that Hegel's ego must be seen here as an ideal type, collective only in the sense of exemplary, subject to a genetic onslaught of existential moods (*Gestalten*), each of which will be cancelled but also retained as a moment of eternal significance.

I am not proposing some legerdemain that will take the 'social' out of Hegel. Clearly he argues that the true ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of man is 'concrete' and 'objective', grounded in collective experience according to the immanent harmonies of a rational community where liberty and order coalesce. 'The experience of what spirit is . . .', according to the *Phenomenology*, is 'the Ego that is "we"', a plurality of Ego, and "we" that is a single Ego.¹¹ Although the pages that introduce the discussion of self-consciousness announce this principle, collective mind does not become a reality until reason (*Vernunft*) achieves intersubjectivity and passes into spirit (*Geist*).¹² Lordship and bondage is a 'moment' of *Selbstbewusstsein* that foreshadows society and has explicit historical rami-

fications. However, the view that the scenario represents a purely social phenomenon is one-sided and needs correction.

What I am about to argue is that lordship and bondage is properly seen from three angles that are equally valid and interpenetrable. One of these angles is necessarily the social, of which Kojève has given such a dazzling reading. Another regards the shifting pattern of psychological domination and servitude within the individual ego. The third then becomes a fusion of the other two processes: the interior consequences wrought by the external confrontation of the Self and the Other, the Other and the Self, which has commenced in the struggle for recognition (*Kampf des Anerkennens*). On the overtly social plane there are, at a given point in history, slaves and masters. In the interior of consciousness, each man possesses faculties of slavery and mastery in his own regard that he struggles to bring into harmony; the question arises whenever the will encounters a resistant 'otherness' that goes beyond mere physical opposition to its activity. In turn, the social and personal oppositions are mediated by the fact that man has the capacity to enslave others and be enslaved by them. Because of the omnipresence of spirit the continuum is not broken by the distinction between world and self.

In brief, man remits the tensions of his being upon the world of fellow beings and is himself changed in the process. This relationship should be stressed, since it furnishes the bridge between psychology and history. Let it be added here also that Hegel's psychology is moral, not analytical: this is why experience continually causes it to shift its ground and why it is, in the deepest sense, historical, a psychology of development, a *Bildungsroman*.

On the one hand, Hegel is showing that mere political mastery or subjection cannot inaugurate the long adventure of history and freedom unless faculties of the subjective mind, necessarily present in all men, create the possibility and condition the result. On the other hand, it is clear that none of this is conceivable in a solipsistic universe. 'Es ist ein Selbstbewusstsein für ein Selbstbewusstsein'¹³ is the abrupt and dramatic prelude to the struggle for recognition out of which mastery and slavery will arise. The possibility of philosophy, morality and right depends on the postulation of a second finite ego and, ultimately, on the assumption of a plurality of egos. Much in the same way that Fichte produces a second ego in order to ground his doctrine of natural right,¹⁴ Hegel posits society at the dawn of self-consciousness for a still more profound purpose: the analysis of the broken ego striving to restore itself. But if the Self and the Other are, to speak bluntly, men, they also dwell within each man. They are original principles of the ego, awakened to combat by the appearance of another ego in which they are reduplicated, and thenceforward transformed by history. Without this shock, there would

be no history, only desire (*Begierde*), man's link with the animal world, and the unproductive and repetitive cycles of biological nature.

Hegel is, to be sure, much less explicit about the internal aspects of lordship and bondage than he is about the interpersonal and historical dimensions. The most casual reading of the *Phenomenology* and other texts makes clear that Hegel intends the analysis of relations among men and a reflection on the rise of historical communities through conquest. But my elucidation in no way denies this obvious fact.

Certain other contingencies obscure the reading I am suggesting. In the first place, the 'social' implications of the tableau are even more emphatic in the Jena sketches, to which a scholar will wisely refer if he wants to understand the evolution of Hegel's thought. In many passages of this early and experimental 'philosophy of the spirit' Hegel is deeply concerned with the concrete formation of society, the nature of work and its elevation to spiritual substantiality, and the creation of a scheme of dialectical development. Different sequences of unfolding and different terminologies – some derivative (mainly Schellingian) and some original – are essayed in these lectures. What will later have discrete places in the treatment of subjective and objective spirit – desire, labour, love, family, *Volksgeist* etc. – are seen struggling for systematic deployment. And admittedly in the 'recognition' scenario the emphasis is on the concrete and social. In the 1803–4 lectures, the deduction of the family precedes the struggle for recognition, indicating that Hegel is here concerned with anthropo-historical development rather than the presentation of 'facts of consciousness'.¹⁵ But in the 1805–6 lectures, in a passage corresponding to what Hegel will later call 'anthropology' (the forms of the human soul before the awakening of consciousness), the Other is evoked as a Schellingian 'dark principle': 'The Other [is] Evil, a being-in-itself, the subterranean principle, the thing which knows what lies in daylight and witnesses how it purposively [brings about] its own decline, or is in such active opposition that, on the contrary, it substitutes negativity for its own being, for its own self-preservation.'¹⁶ The *Encyclopaedia* will clarify for us how the pre-conscious being is bifurcated even before it gains awareness of its own selfhood, and how lordship and bondage will display an analogous auto-alienation at the higher conscious level.

A second factor which might mislead is the characteristic Hegelian insistence, against Kant, that the properties of the mind are integral and not the derivations of separate faculties or principles, like theoretical and practical reason (cognition and will),¹⁷ or like the Fichtean dichotomy of finite ego and pure ego resolved only by an *ought*.¹⁸ Of course, this is the 'standpoint of reason', the goal of the Hegelian philosophy. But one obviously cannot jump from here to the conclusion that lower forms of consciousness apprehend themselves monistically. In fact the opposite is true, whether the Other is felt as impulse, as a hostile stranger, or as a

transcendent God. Since Hegelian philosophy is process, even though its apotheosis is unity, it has mostly to do with the logical, genetic or historical oppositions that have come about in the progress of the spirit.

Mr G. R. G. Mure, in his excellent study of Hegel's *Logic*, has called particular attention to the dualistic tread of 'higher' and 'lower' principles in Hegel and has doubted their effective resolution.¹⁹ I share this feeling. One cannot of course gather in the depths of the *Phenomenology* by looking at it through post-Enlightenment spectacles alone. In the background always and at the surface much of the time Hegel is wrestling with the problems of Greek antiquity and seeking both to overcome and to eternalize them in an alien climate. The Platonic parallel between the struggles in the state and the struggles in the soul is never far distant. I will permit myself the liberty of saying that the great figures of Aristotle, Plato and Sophocles bestride, respectively, the sections on *Bewusstsein*, *Selbstbewusstsein* and *Geist*. The problem of lordship and bondage is essentially Platonic in foundation, because the primal cleavage in both the history of society and the history of the ego is at stake. The two primordial egos in the struggle that will lead to mastery and slavery are also locked in battle with themselves.

A third deterrent to a balanced reading of lordship and bondage is the temptation to treat the *Phenomenology* as an enigmatic philosophy of history. Sometimes this is done so that its 'progressive' implications can be favourably compared with the conclusions of Hegel's later lectures. But the schematic arrangement of Hegel's finished system, given by the *Encyclopaedia*, should warn us away from this adventure: history belongs to objective spirit and phenomenology to subjective, even though the experience of objective spirit is a fact of consciousness. Although the *Phenomenology* must necessarily utilize history to illustrate forms of consciousness, it is not to be inferred that the two genealogies are integrally parallel. Hegel's conscious avoidance of proper names is the best clue to his design.

This point can become confused, since Hegel in both instances is dealing with temporal process and since historical time is the condition for human thought. The evolution of mind runs along the same time scale as the fate of nations. Thus, philosophical analyses that are conceptually independent must be joined in communicative discourse and must plunder the same treasury of empirical materials. Mind as *Geist* is the integrative operator, just as temporality makes the operation possible. But the *Phenomenology* is not primarily a disquisition on political philosophy; it is the record of the spirit's efforts to attain peace in the knowledge that there is nothing outside itself.

One may question, as I do, the prestidigitatory feats of Hegel in keeping these two lines of philosophical inquiry discrete and correlative at the same time. There is more than animus in Haym's famous complaint

that 'etwas Anderes ist die Geschichte, und etwas Anderes ist die Psychologie'.²⁰ In fact, we all do read the *Phenomenology* as historical and political commentary quite legitimately, since it is concerned with the external relations of mind amid a plurality of egos. But the transformations of mind within itself are equally important. Both destinies, according to Hegel, will be identical in the last analysis.

Finally, if we hypothesize that mastery and slavery contains both developments, we shall not be greatly disturbed by Hegel's leaps between the social and the solitary in his deduction of *Selbstbewusstsein*, as he delineates the forms of 'otherness' (*Anderssein*) in Stoicism, scepticism, and the 'unhappy consciousness'.

The clue to the whole matter is, I think, given in the following passage from the *Phenomenology*:

The conception of this its [of self-consciousness] unity in its duplication, of infinitude realizing itself in self-consciousness, has many sides to it and encloses within it elements of varied significance. Thus its moments must on the one hand be strictly kept apart in detailed distinctiveness, and, on the other, in this distinction must, at the same time, also be taken as not distinguished, or must always be accepted and understood in their opposite sense.²¹

If Hegel means what I think, he is encouraging us to draw the plenitude of associations from the Self-Other confrontation. Thus although Hegel can be only imperfectly conveyed by static formulas: Self = Other; Self = Self + Other; Self (Other) <> Other (Self); and Self + Other in Self = Self + Other in Other etc. I regard the final formulation as most complete. In the following discussion, Hegel expands this idea:

This process of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has . . . been represented as the action of one alone. But this action on the part of the one has itself the double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well. . . . The action has then a *double entente* not only in the sense that it is an act done to itself as well as to the other, but also in the sense that the act *simpliciter* is the act of the one as well as of the other regardless of their distinction.²²

A corresponding passage from the *Propädeutik*, being simpler (prepared for the instruction of pre-university students), has perhaps greater clarity:

A self-consciousness which is for another self-consciousness is not only for it as a pure object, but *as its other self*. The ego is not an abstract universality which, as such, contains no distinction or determination.

The ego being thus object for the ego, it is for it, in this view, like the same ego which it itself is. In the other, it intuit itself.²³

One difficulty in following Hegel lies in the fact that he often tries to convey the experience of the consciousness both from its own point of view and from the high ground of the philosopher. Another is in the perpetual passage from inner to outer which is the motor of the consciousness' experience that will be dissolved in ultimate knowledge. But the awakening of opposed faculties in the ego proposed by the fact of society is the principle on which self-consciousness would seem to depend. First, the spiritualization of desire will create the basis for selfhood. Then recognition will be demanded for its authentication. The faculties of the ego must contend in order to act, since a single comprehensive faculty, in however many egos, would render them either totally static or totally destructive (which amounts to the same thing).

Correspondingly, the pattern unfolds in social life. The mutual awareness of two persons, their reciprocal need for recognition, their struggle to obtain it, and the final subjection of the one to the other – these stages idealize the primitive sources of human history, seen this time from the angle of society but still rooted in the problem of the developing consciousness. Mr Plamenatz should have no difficulty with the fact that there are only two protagonists. For, from this angle, when the struggle concludes in mastery and slavery, the master will perceive but a single slave-machine that does his bidding and the slave but a single source of oppression. Hegel's formulation here establishes the mediating link between consciousness and society, serving somewhat the same purpose as the analogous device of the *homo economicus*. Indeed, it is to the famous tale of Robinson and Friday that Hegel refers us in the *Propädeutik*.²⁴

Just as the Hegelian analysis demands the postulation of two egos (one man as spirit would be God, or would possess no spirit),²⁵ so at each of its ascending stages the consciousness must apprehend itself as two estranged principles until its goal is reached. This is most clearly seen in the *Encyclopaedia*, where we can delve behind the stirrings of subjective mind or 'phenomenology' proper into 'anthropology', which has as its focus the notion of the 'natural soul'. Here spirit has emerged out of nature but not yet awakened to consciousness. In this relatively little-studied part of Hegel's work, the soul corresponds roughly to what psychoanalysis will later label the 'pre-conscious'; here are contained many perceptive insights into neurotic anxiety, undoubtedly based on the philosopher's personal experience and the tragic deterioration of his friend Hölderlin.²⁶

In *Encyclopaedia*, paragraphs 318–19 (1817),²⁷ Hegel makes it clear that the soul is life on the margin of consciousness, that it primitively feels its bifurcation, its antagonism with otherness. It is subjectively

anchored to its future self-conscious career and yet mired in the blind universality of nature. On the other hand (paragraph 323),²⁸ the opposition is productive and necessary. Here is the primary internal opposition in the genesis of the human condition.

Consciousness arises when the natural soul, by setting its instinct against nature, can affirm itself as an ego (paragraph 327).²⁹ The relationship to otherness is now a dichotomy between self and natural soul (paragraph 329).³⁰ Self-consciousness, on the other hand, will require the affirmation by the ego of its own identity, taking the immediate form of desire (paragraphs 344–6).³¹ Here the '*Selbstbewusstsein*' section of the *Phenomenology* properly commences, with the inadequacy of repetitive desire, the application of desire to another ego, the struggle for recognition, and the dialectical resolution in lordship and bondage. The internal struggle which expressed itself first in the natural soul, then in the consciousness, has not been resolved or abandoned. Rather, personality can emerge only because of its need for self-recognition, a consequence of ceasing to direct desire merely upon the objects of sheer natural appetite (paragraph 351).³² A higher, resistant otherness has been encountered; it expresses itself externally as a second ego, internally as primitive reason or self-mastery, and reciprocally as the capacity for will and freedom. But, like the original assertion of self-consciousness through the ego's becoming aware of itself, this new stage of being must in turn be authenticated. This will happen in the struggle for recognition, where appetite and spiritual self-regard contend. They can no more destroy each other than can the social antagonists: the career of man is the proof. Thus mastery and slavery ensue, both within the ego and, as Hegel makes abundantly clear (paragraph 355), in the history of society.³³

The parallel explanations are necessary. For, taken from a purely social point of view, there is no good reason why two identical egos, locked in combat, should not struggle to a static stalemate. To say that Hegel's resolution is good dialectics answers nothing. Instead we should discern the idea that natural inequalities arise in consequence of internal imbalances, not through the absence or presence of pure principles in single individuals. I shall return to this point in connection with theories of history.

'Where did Hegel's ideas on the relation of lord and servant originate?' inquires Dirk J. Struik in his edition of Marx's 1844 manuscripts.³⁴ This interesting question has a considerable bearing on the subject at hand. We can help to clarify the significance of Hegel's passage by referring to the intellectual milieu in which his philosophy took shape.

It is important to understand that this is still a world where normative psychology is seen as dominating the forms of society. Despite primitive stirrings of a social science, one still asks the question 'what is man?' in order to understand the social order man has created. The strife within

man's nature is a commonplace; as Montesquieu put it: 'man . . . is composed of the two substances, each of which, in its flux and reflux, imposes and suffers domination [*empire*]'.³⁵ On the psychological plane we should recall Hume's striking dictum that 'reason is the slave of the passions' and the consequent attempts of German idealism to restore the primacy of reason by enlarging its content. We should notice also that the reason-passion relationship gathers in a metaphorical content, which is precisely that of mastery and servitude. In essence, Kant's philosophy, grounded in the ideal of personal autonomy, is a theorization both of how the individual can acquire mastery over his content-directed interests through the exercise of morality or 'pure practical reason' and of the conditions by which a legitimate social order can make this possible. The famous aphorism 'man needs a master'³⁶ carries both public and private overtones. In fact, according to Kant, man *ought* to be his own master. But, in the words of Richard Kroner, 'because he ought to master himself, man is not really free but divided against himself, half-free and half-slave. At best, he is his own slave, enslaved by his master, reason.'³⁷

Behind this urgent question, which burst out of speculation and into history with the coming of the French Revolution, lies the dual preoccupation of Rousseau: his assertion that there is no 'right of conquest' in society, and his profound research into the warring sides of the human personality which the shock of social relations has induced. 'A man thinks he is master of others, whereas he is actually more of a slave than they', writes Rousseau in *Contrat social*, I, i;³⁸ in his eighth *Lettre de la Montagne* he repeats: 'He who is a master cannot be free.'³⁹ As we know from the second discourse, *Emile*, and the autobiographical writings, a struggle of the human faculties underlies the social dilemma.⁴⁰

Not only for Hegel, but for his great predecessors and his age as a whole, mastery and slavery was a multi-dimensional problem – and a paradoxical one. The paradox is this. Antiquity, which had sanctioned the institution of slavery, had nevertheless intensely researched the dilemma of man's enslavement of himself. The Enlightenment, by contrast, progressively attacked social bondage as abusive and immoral, while scratching only at the surface of its spiritual dimensions. And yet the Enlightenment, taken generally, viewed the social order from individualistic premises. Descartes had founded the ego and, from the time of Hobbes on, the empirical school had constructed a mechanistic psychology which purported to explain the nature of society by way of its members. The revival of antiquity, in substance as well as form, by Rousseau on the one hand and the German idealists on the other – even when the battle of ancients and moderns had been seemingly won by the latter – is in part a response to this perplexity. The Enlightenment had furnished a sense of progress; it had not restored the conviction of harmony. Both the mind and the social order were implicated. If society

was in process, then the mind could not be explored statically as the rationalists had taught. With Hegel there is the recognition that both elements of explanation are necessary and that they must be mediated. This becomes possible only when mind is seen to have a history of its own. The tensions that propel social history are correspondingly translated to the development of the ego (a procedure in which the works of Rousseau and Kant are way-stations). Here the profundities of Greek thought find their place and their role. The problem of mastery and slavery lies along this axis. For Hegel, however, the resolution can be only tragic or unbearably smug (one takes one's pick) because history, the carrier of *Geist* and freedom, is also the perfect warrant of man's fate.

A passage from Fichte's *Contributions to the Rectification of Public Opinion Concerning the French Revolution* (1793) further illustrates the currency of the lordship-bondage metaphor. Here the youthful Fichte employs the figure of the warring personality in a coinage borrowed from the French historian Marmontel.⁴¹ Reason (i.e. the principle of the Revolution) rhetorizes against conventional self-interest (hereditary privilege):

From our birth, he [reason] invited us to a long and terrible duel where liberty and slavery were at stake. If you are stronger, he told us, I will be your slave. I will be a very useful servant for you; but I will always be a restless servant, and as soon as there is some slack in my yoke, I will defeat my master and conqueror. And once I throw you down, I will insult you, dishonour you, trample you under. Since you can be of no use to me, I will profit by my right of conquest to seek your total destruction.⁴²

We do not know whether Hegel read Fichte's incendiary tract against the German Burkeans, but it seems likely that he did, since it was, to say the least, hot copy among young intellectuals. In any case, the contemporary associations of lordship and bondage are not to be understood without the illustrations from across the Rhine.

However, when Hegel came to formulate his mature system, he was, as we know, not an unqualified admirer of the French Revolution or of the autocracy of abstract reason with its 'bad infinity'. The new 'right of conquest' had no more appeal than the old. Like all stages of human struggle, the oppositions of the ego had to be reconciled, not concluded in a new unilateral domination.⁴³ In the primitive scenario of the *Phenomenology* the resolution of lordship and bondage is in 'stoicism', and it is probably no accident that there are resemblances between this form of consciousness and Kant's transcendental idealism, the idea posed above the French Revolution.⁴⁴ Though I do not want to draw parallels out of context in Hegel's system, it may not be amiss to call attention to the

climate of ideas in which his thoughts about lordship and bondage developed. Undoubtedly the split-personality view of contemporary European philosophy counts for much.

Another brief excursion into German intellectual history can provide a different illustration. When Hegel was developing the rudiments of the master-slave dialectic, he was associated, though not uncritically, with the philosophical ideas of his younger but more precocious friend Schelling. By the time he published the *Phenomenology* in 1807 he had struck his own highly original posture. In the mean time, the split between the philosophies of Schelling and Fichte (which Hegel himself attempted to mediate in his *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems* of 1801) had become irreconcilable and had led to vituperative exchange. The same half-decade saw the rise of the Romantic movement, under the aegis of Novalis and the Schlegels, and the efflorescence of interest in philosophy of history, which had been heralded by Lessing and Herder in the previous century.

Schelling's philosophy, which began from the premise of the identity of the Absolute, required a theory of history by which the descent of the Absolute into the plurality of creation and the return of created things to the Absolute could be explained. The key to this movement was to be discovered in the principle of human freedom. Schelling traced the idea grandiosely and abstractly in the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), in the *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1802), and in some later writings. In reply to Schelling and, more especially, the Romantics, Fichte entered the lists with his public lectures, the *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, delivered in 1804 and published in 1806. Fichte's scheme of philosophical history, built on purely deductive foundations and in some ways indebted to Kant, challenged his opponents on a variety of issues that do not concern this essay.⁴⁵ What is of interest is a fundamental assumption that Fichte and Schelling shared and which could scarcely have failed to draw Hegel's attention.⁴⁶

The speculative histories of Fichte and Schelling were phased and developmental; both in effect sought to deduce the pattern whereby original man, innocent but instinctual in nature, mounted to his goal of rationality in freedom, or achieved what Schelling described as a 'second nature'. In order to do this, the principle of reason had to be explained at its origin. Schelling was the first to postulate that at the dawn of humanity there had been creatures of pure instinctual reason and simple barbarians. Fichte borrowed this explanation (which is not without its obvious indebtedness to mythology): 'out of nothing, nothing can arise; and thus Unreason can never become Reason. Hence, in one point of its existence at least, the Human Race must have been purely Reasonable in its primitive form, without either constraint or freedom.'⁴⁷ However, this '*Normalvolk*' had no history; for them, one day was like the next,

and 'religion alone adorned their existence'.⁴⁸ It was thus necessary to postulate a race of barbarians. The union of the two races was what made history and society possible. In the 'Normalvolk' there was no tension to activate the spring of progress; on the other hand, they embodied the principle of human destiny. The savages, on their part, lacked this principle utterly, but they contained the force of historical propulsion. Consequently, after an interlude when Cartesian paradise and Darwinian brutishness presumably coexisted, society took form with the dispersion of the races, the subjection of the savages to 'Normalvolk' kings, intermarriage, and the tortuous ascent of miscegenated man to freedom. Apparently, Asia was the historical location for this event; the Old Testament was a 'myth of the normal people'.⁴⁹

The parallel between this historical hypothesis of Schelling and Fichte and Hegel's lordship and bondage is much more than coincidental. Either the idea was in the air, or there was direct cross-fertilization from Schelling. However, Hegel does not accept this solution.⁵⁰ He nowhere endorses any speculation concerning original 'rational' men and original 'savage' men. Reason is not a natural principle in his anthropology, any more than it is for Rousseau. In Hegel, as we have seen, the appearance of self and self-awareness will succeed the primitive efforts of the pre-conscious soul to wrest its being from nature. Consequently, although a social event, mastery and slavery will result necessarily from struggles of awareness and recognition within the ego and not from the absolute opposition of racial principles embodied in discrete, historical individuals. Hegel is defending a doctrine of original equality which is curiously and dangerously denied by Fichte.⁵¹

Thus I believe that the passage in the *Phenomenology* and in other works can be justifiably interpreted, *inter alia*, as an attempt to explain inequality at the foundation of society without resorting to the dual-nature hypothesis. The alternative is to explain it from within the ego. Here, precisely, is the 'phenomenological' dimension that we lack in Kojève.

Let us attempt to restore this dimension. The 'master' who emerges from the struggle for recognition can be identified with the primitive notion of control or decision. Hegel tells us specifically that this act of victory is the birth of freedom (*Encyclopaedia*, paragraph 355).⁵² Man is the only creature which, under certain 'non-natural' pressures, is willing to stake its life. This is, so to speak, the first creative act of the human personality: the slave will invent history, but only after the master has made humanity possible. The master's solution, however, is without issue. Hegel has already (in *Encyclopaedia*, paragraph 323 and elsewhere)⁵³ pointed out the danger of imbalance between higher and lower principles. One cannot abandon nature, nor should one drown oneself in it. In the

master-slave situation, there is neither education, nor progress, nor history – only the repetitive fulfilment of the master's wants.

In this impasse, the master-principle – courage, decisiveness, idealism – is seen to pass into its opposite, becoming, as Kojève points out,⁵⁴ a new form of *Begierde*. Higher development can come only from the slave-principle, which has itself been transformed through the experience of subjection and terror into the activities of labour, conservation and memory: the conditions of human advance. Here are manifold historical overtones which it is not difficult to exploit. I think, though, that two points must be argued against Kojève: (1) the slave-master dialectic is appropriate only to a certain stage of consciousness for Hegel, even though it is still cancelled and retained (*aufgehoben*); succeeding history will be a record of more subtle and comprehensive forms of estrangement; (2) both principles are equally vital in the progress of the spirit towards its destiny: if Marx developed one side of this dichotomy, Nietzsche seized upon the other.

This is decisively clarified by Hegel himself in the *Philosophy of Right*:

The position of the free will, with which right and the science of right begin, is already in advance of the false position at which man, as a natural entity and only the concept implicit, is for that reason capable of being enslaved. This false, *comparatively primitive* [my italics], phenomenon of slavery is one which befalls mind when mind is only at the level of consciousness. The dialectic of the concept and of the purely immediate consciousness of freedom brings about at that point the fight for recognition and the relationship of master and slave.⁵⁵

In a corresponding *Zusatz* Hegel adds: 'if a man is a slave, his own will is responsible for his slavery, just as it is its will which is responsible if a people is subjugated. Hence the wrong of slavery lies at the door not simply of enslavers or conquerors but of the slaves and the conquered themselves.'⁵⁶

This should be sufficient to show that 'the future belongs to the slave' is an unwarranted and romanticized refraction of Hegel's thought. Slavery cannot found the right of political communities any more than it can account for the free personality. But it is necessary for history as well as for the development of mind: both right and free personality appear in history and do not repose above it. In the *Encyclopaedia* of 1845 (paragraph 435, *Zusatz*) Hegel describes the subjection of the servant as 'a necessary moment in the education (*Bildung*) of every man'.⁵⁷ 'No man', he adds, 'can, without this will-breaking discipline, become free and worthy to command.' As for nations, 'bondage and tyranny are necessary things in the history of peoples'. This could be adapted to the Marxian view of the proletariat. But as we recall from the *Phenomenology*, the

dialectical outcome is not a trans-historical class struggle but the temporary refuge of stoicism, where emperor and slave see the world with the same eyes. Even though 'only through the slave's becoming free can the master be completely free',⁵⁸ the Hegelian future will unfold out of their joint endeavours. They can no more be incessantly opposed than can the organic faculties of the ego itself.

My conclusion is foreshadowed. Although inner and outer, higher and lower, reason and passion are undoubtedly intended to be dissolved at the ultimate Hegelian apex, the internality of the ego cannot be disregarded in understanding the development of *Selbstbewusstsein*. The social reading, taken alone, can encourage sharp distortions. Nor is history for Hegel simply a record of the millennial efforts of the slave to overthrow the master, just as the development of spirit is not the continuous attempt of a single faculty to triumph in the ego. In both cases, the aspiration is harmony and self-knowing identity, the sense of 'being at home' (*zuhause sein*) so frequently evoked in Hegel, the assimilation of freedom and fate. The failure to read Hegel's texts (especially those leading up to 'lordship and bondage') with close attention to levels of discourse can beget social hypotheses that do not square with Hegel's known conclusions. We can further profit by exploring the philosophical and historical issues of Hegel's own time, instead of superimposing those of an industrial epoch which he only narrowly, if shrewdly, glimpsed. That the character of the rational Hegelian society is much more Platonic than it is Marxian is already clear from the Jena lectures, which antedate the *Phenomenology*.⁵⁹ Kojève's original exegesis of Hegelian themes is a profound work for our own times. But from the standpoint of historical understanding a 'Marxian' *Phenomenology* does not make very good sense. This view ignores the depth and passion of Hegel's Greek attachments; it ignores, too, the complicated range of his struggle with the Kantian split vision. These are the two combatants wrestling on the soil of Christian Europe for the possession of Hegel's own ego.⁶⁰ It is to be questioned whether he resolved this struggle of the old world and the new in his higher *Sittlichkeit* of the nation-state and in his 'Christianity without pictures'.

Notes

1 See Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans. by David E. Green (New York, 1964), pp. 65–135.

2 Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. by Dirk J. Struik (New York, 1964), esp. pp. 170–93 ('Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole') [reprinted in Volume I, pp. 163–81. R.S.]. Marx writes (p. 177): 'The outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phenomenology* and of its final outcome . . . is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and

as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of *labour* and comprehends objective man . . . as the outcome of man's *own labour*.' It would be appropriate here to mention that, like Hegel, I assign no particular significance of nuance to the synonyms 'slavery', 'bondage' and 'servitude'. I have also chosen to avoid taxing the patience of the reader with unnecessary dialectical vocabulary.

3 Cf. Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (Paris, 1946), I, p. 166; and T. M. Knox (trans.), *Hegel's Early Theological Writings* (Chicago, 1948), intro. by R. Kröner, p. 13.

4 Hyppolite, I, pp. 161–71.

5 This remarkable study is a compilation of Alexandre Kojève's courses on the *Phenomenology* (ed. by Raymond Queneau, Paris, 1947), given at the Sorbonne in the years 1933–9, which exerted a powerful influence on Sartre and French Hegelianism in general.

6 'Awareness' is conceivably a better translation of *Bewusstsein* than is 'consciousness', but there are problems with each. I have reluctantly chosen the traditional term because in Hegel's language *Bewusstsein* is an agent as well as a condition or capacity.

7 Kojève, p. 34.

8 *ibid.*, pp. 308–9 and 308n. A comment on the perspective of the *Phenomenology* imposes itself at this point. I tend to agree with those who hold that the sequence and development of the *Phenomenology* are *sui generis* and related to the intention of the work, as juxtaposed, especially, to the *Encyclopaedia*. Thus these differences alone do not allow us to conclude that Hegel changed his philosophical viewpoint between 1807 and 1817. In cases of disagreement between a 'philosophy of mind' and a 'phenomenology of mind', caution of interpretation is advised. This reservation does not seem applicable to the case of 'lordship and bondage'.

9 John Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, 2 vols. (New York–San Francisco, 1963), II, p. 155.

10 *ibid.*, II, pp. 190–2. However, neither Kojève nor, especially, Karl Marx would ask Plamenatz's second question. Cf. Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 177: 'The only labour which Hegel knows and recognizes is abstractly mental labour.'

11 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), p. 140; *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. Baillie (London, 1927), p. 227. I have furnished Baillie's translation throughout.

12 *ibid.*, Hoffmeister, pp. 313ff.; Baillie, pp. 455ff.

13 Hegel, *Enzyklopädie und Schriften aus der Heidelberger Zeit, Sämtliche Werke*, VI, ed. by H. Glockner (Stuttgart, 1927), paragraph 352, p. 253.

14 J. G. Fichte, *Grundlage des Naturrechts, Sämmlte Werke*, III (Berlin, 1845), pp. 30ff.; *The Science of Right*, trans. by A. E. Kroeger (Philadelphia, 1869), pp. 48ff.

15 Hegel, *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, ed. by J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1932), pp. 223ff.

16 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, ed. by J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1931), p. 200.

17 See, for example, Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. and ed. by T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1945), *Zusatz* to paragraph 4, p. 227; the paragraph citation will enable the reader to locate the passage readily in the German edition.

18 *Enzyklopädie*, in Glockner, VI, paragraph 332, p. 246.

19 G. R. G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 367–8.

20 Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (orig. edn, 1857; photostatic reproduction, Hildesheim, 1962), p. 241.

21 Hoffmeister, p. 141; Baillie, p. 229.

22 Hoffmeister, p. 142; Baillie, p. 230.

23 *Philosophische Propädeutik*, Glockner, III, paragraph 30, p. 108.

24 *ibid.*, p. 35, p. 110.

25 See *Phenomenology*, pp. 226–7: 'A self-consciousness has before it a self-consciousness. Only so and only then is it self-consciousness in actual fact; for here first of all it comes to have the unity of itself in its otherness.'

26 See Johannes Hoffmeister, *Hölderlin und Hegel in Frankfurt* (Tübingen, 1931).

27 Glockner, VI, pp. 236–7.

28 *ibid.*, p. 242.

29 *ibid.*, p. 244.

30 *ibid.*, p. 245.

31 *ibid.*, pp. 251–2.

32 *ibid.*, p. 253.

33 *ibid.*, p. 255.

34 Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

35 Charles, Baron de Montesquieu et de la Brède, *Pensées, Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1949), I, p. 1015.

36 Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View', *Kant on History*, ed. by L. W. Beck (New York, 1963), p. 17.

37 Kroner, introduction to Knox (trans.), *Hegel's Early Theological Writings*, p. 11.

38 C. E. Vaughan, *The Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 2 vols. (New York, 1962), II, p. 23.

39 *ibid.*, p. 234.

40 See *Emile ou l'éducation* (Paris, 1961), Book IV, p. 404: 'O my friend, my protector, my master . . . prevent me from being the slave of my passions, and force me to be my own master by obeying my reason and not my senses.'

41 Jean-François Marmontel, contributor to the *Encyclopédie*, replaced Duclos in 1771 as historiographer of France. He was elected to the *Conseil des anciens* in 1797, but was retired from public life by the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor. Fichte cites one of his poems.

42 J. G. Fichte, *Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Urteile des Publikums über die Französische Revolution*, ed. by Stecker (Leipzig, 1922), p. 51.

43 See *Enzyklopädie*, Glockner, VI, paragraph 393, pp. 276–8.

44 See especially *Philosophy of Right*, Introduction, paragraphs 19–21, pp. 28–30. Cf. Hegel's early (1797) attack on Kant (re: *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*, IV, 2, paragraph 3) in his essay 'Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal', *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. by Herman Nohl (Tübingen, 1907), pp. 265–6: 'between the Tungusian Shaman, the European prelate governing Church and State, or the Mogul or Puritan, and the man obedient to the commandment of duty [the Kantian], the distinction is not to be made that the one enslaves himself while the other is free, but that the one is dominated from without, while the other, having his master within, is by that token his own slave'.

45 For a full clarification of these issues, see Xavier Léon, *Fichte et son temps*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1924), II, pp. 394–463.

46 We know that Hegel read Fichte's excursus on philosophical history and thought little of it, as well as of the 'popular philosophy' in which Fichte indulged: see Hegel's letter to Schelling, dated Jena, 3 January 1807, No. 82, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), I, p. 131. His knowledge of the *Grundzüge* was probably too late to affect the *Phenomenology*; however,

he was perfectly familiar with all Schelling's ideas antecedent to 1804 because of their close collaboration at Jena.

47 J. G. Fichte, *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, Lecture IX (Hamburg, 1956), p. 138; *Characteristics of the Present Age, The Popular Works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte*, trans. by William Smith (London, 1884), II, p. 147. See also F. W. J. Schelling, *Vorlesungen, Sämmtliche Werke* (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1854–60), V, pp. 224–5.

48 *Grundzüge*, p. 139; Smith, p. 148.

49 *Grundzüge*, p. 143; Smith, p. 152.

50 See Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (Hamburg, 1955), p. 31.

51 Fichte is, of course, the German philosopher who, *par excellence*, stressed equality and was often attacked as a Jacobin. However, there is a nervous resemblance, across all human history, between the 'Normalvolk' of the *Grundzüge* and the 'Urvolk' of the *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808).

52 Glockner, VI, p. 254.

53 *ibid.*, p. 242.

54 *Lecture de Hegel*, p. 52.

55 Knox (trans.), paragraph 57, p. 48.

56 *ibid.*, p. 239.

57 Glockner, X (*System der Philosophie*, III), p. 288.

58 *ibid.*, *Zusatz* to paragraph 436, p. 290.

59 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, pp. 253–63. We must not ignore, however, that Hegel carefully draws the distinction between the Platonic (Lacedemonian) and the modern polity (p. 251).

60 The Greeks for Hegel, as for Schiller, Hölderlin and others, have developed the perfect harmony and proportion of humanity; Kant's morality, on the other hand, represents the infinity of striving and is framed not for man but for 'all rational beings'. In one of his most electrifying and brilliant passages, Hegel describes the impact of the infinite and the finite, always in the same metaphor of struggle and comprehension: 'I am the struggle [between the extremes of infinity and finitude], for this struggle is a conflict defined not by the indifference of the two sides in their distinction, but by their being bound together in one entity. I am not one of the fighters locked in battle, but both, and I am the struggle itself. I am fire and water' (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Glockner, XV, p. 80).

Extract from *Antigones*

George Steiner

Hegel's prose does offer difficulties of a peculiar sort. Much of the work after the *Phenomenology* has come down to us in the form of lecture-notes imperfectly taken. A good many of the texts which precede 1807, on the other hand, were not meant for publication. They embody juvenilia, sketches, rough drafts, and fragments of self-address. Their publication is a result of posthumous glory. Yet it is these early, essentially private writings which are now regarded as vital to an understanding of Hegel and subjected to exhaustive commentary. However, even if we had only those works which Hegel himself saw into print, the inhibitions to understanding would be real. The fragmentary character of the early texts, indeed of the *Phenomenology* itself, together with the provisional, didactically self-revising format of the Berlin University lectures, are no biographical accident. Hegel's whole discourse enacts a refusal of fixity, of formal closure. This refusal is cardinal to his method and makes the notions of 'system' and of 'totality', customarily attached to Hegelianism, elusive. In Hegel, reflection and utterance are in constant motion on three levels: the metaphysical, the logical and the psychological – the last of which encompasses the other two in so far as it seeks to make explicit the processes of consciousness which generate and structure metaphysical and logical operations. These three conceptual levels interpenetrate (this is the case at almost every point in Hegel's readings of *Antigone*). Hegel rigorously subverts the naive linearities of common argument in order to communicate the simultaneities, often conflicting, and inward recursions or self-corrections of his proposals. But he did not have available to him those typographical and syntactical dislocations we are familiar with since Mallarmé. Hence the tension between vertical, 'chordal' compositions of meaning and the external conventions of an eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century prose.

Yet, as we learn to trust Hegel's style, it takes on a paradoxical

transparency. 'Hegel semble, en effet, avoir réussi à *se regarder penser* et même à noter, peut-être au fur et à mesure de leur déroulement, les étapes et les démarches successives de sa pensée' ('In effect, Hegel seems to have succeeded in *looking at himself thinking*, and even in registering, step by step, during the actual process of their development, the successive stages and motions of his thought').¹ This is an acute observation. But we can go further.

Hegel, and this is rare, was able to *think against himself*, and to observe and record himself doing so. The essence of Hegel's method and thought is self-polemic. Negation, sublation (*Aufhebung*) with its simultaneous reciprocities of dissolution, conservation and augment, the coil and recoil of the dialectic mode, are the immediate theoretical instruments of Hegel's principle of adverse or 'counter-thought'. This principle is obsessively at work in Hegel's model of divided consciousness and alienation. Only Plato rivals Hegel as a dramatist and self-dramatist of meaning. But in the Platonic dialogues it is the tactics of argument which are dramatic rather than the substance. The latter can be, indeed it often has been, presented without its dialectic form. This is not so of Hegel. For Hegel, to think, to realize and articulate the dynamics of identity is to 'think against'. It is to 'dramatize' in the root-sense of the verb, which is one of pure action. Spirit is action, proclaims the *Phenomenology*, action of an inherently agonistic or 'conflictual' kind. A sovereign passage from the Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* summarizes the dramatic-polemic ethos of Hegel's method:

Ich erhebe mich denkend zum Absoluten über alles Endliche und bin unendliches Bewusstsein und zugleich bin ich endliches Selbstbewusstsein und zwar nach meiner ganzen empirischen Bestimmung. Beide Seiten suchen sich and fliehen sich. Ich bin und es ist in mir für mich dieser Widerstreit und diese Einigung. Ich bin der Kampf. Ich bin nicht Einer der im Kampf Begriffenen, sondern ich bin beide Kämpfende und der Kampf selbst.

(Through thought, I raise myself to the Absolute above all finality; I am unbounded consciousness and at the same time I am finite self-consciousness, and this in accord with my whole empirical presentness and constitution. Both sides seek each other and flee from each other. I am, and there is in me and for me, this mutual conflict and this union. I am the combat. I am not one of the combatants; rather, I am both combatants and the combat itself.)

Given this ethos, drama, and tragic drama in particular, occupies a privileged place in the growth of Hegel's thought. A theory of tragedy is not an adjunct to Hegel's construct. It is a testing ground and validation

for main tenets of Hegel's historicism, for the dialectical scenario of his logic, and for the central notion of consciousness in progressive conflict. Certain Greek tragedies, the *Antigone* pre-eminently, are as functional to the Hegelian thought-world as are certain expressionist lyric poems and the odes of Hölderlin to the ontology and language-mystique of Heidegger.²

Hegel's fascination with Sophocles dates back to an attempted translation of *Oedipus at Colonus* in the summer of 1787. But one cannot order in any neat temporal sequence the stages of reflection which lead to the first specific citation of *Antigone* in the late winter of 1795 or early spring of 1796. Hegel's nascent thought is a close weave in which multiple strands cross and recross synchronically.³ Three main skeins or loops of argument bear on later readings of *Antigone*. Hegel's idealization of ancient Hellas is, as we saw, representative of his generation.⁴ In one of the fragments composed while he was still at Tübingen, Hegel remarks on the 'schmerzliches Sehnen' ('the poignant, painful longing') which draws the modern soul to the remembrance of Greece. Only amid the 'happy people' of Periclean Athens were political liberty and religious faith concordant. This concordance was not abstract. The young Hegel insists on the singularly 'concrete' and 'immanent' quality of the Attic genius – an insistence in which are implicit the first moves in the Hegelian critique of Kant. The Greek *πόλις* will never signify for Hegel a contingent moment in human affairs. The ideal which the *πόλις* embodied, and the problem of the inadequacies or inherent self-destructiveness of this ideal, will persist at the core of Hegel's teachings. To ask philosophically is (as it will be for Heidegger, that great reader of Hegel) to ask of Minerva. But during the Berne period, and certainly in 1794–5, the Utopian-lyric image of Athens, which the young Hegel had shared with Hölderlin and Schelling, alters.

In early 1795, if Nohl's datings of the theological juvenilia are correct, Hegel perceives the contrarities latent in what he had taken to be the Attic concordance of the political-civic and the religious-ritual spheres. At roughly this point, in a threefold, overlapping consideration of the life of Christ, of the persona of Socrates, and of the oligarchic conditions of government in Berne, Hegel is possessed, to use Lukács' striking phrase, by 'the contradictoriness of being itself'.⁵ He now labours to resolve this contradictoriness or, more exactly, to activate it into productive tension. In a text written at the beginning of 1795, Hegel designates religion as 'the nurse' of free men and the state as 'their mother'. It is in this specific context, in Nohl's fragment 222, that Sophocles' *Antigone* is first invoked. But the duality between religion and state is itself the consequence of an earlier alienation. There is, as Rousseau had seen, a tragic, though necessary and progressive, mechanism of rupture in the origins of the body politic: that of man's 'Entzweiung mit der

Natur' ('scission from nature'). It is this estrangement which contains the source of ethical positivity. Contra Fichte, Hegel argues for the fundamentally social condition of the integral human individual, for the vanity of moral self-fulfilment in isolation from a social-civic fabric of values and options. Against Kant, Hegel is beginning to emphasize the concrete historicity and 'collective' character of the ethical choices which the individual is compelled to make, a compulsion which divides and, therefore, advances consciousness on its teleological path. Rosenzweig assigns this phase in Hegel's development to the Frankfurt period, 1796–1800. He points to the influence of Montesquieu and to Hegel's strained attempts to combine a qualified Kantian idealism with a 'Jacobin-absolutist' model of the nation-state.⁶ Shortly before the decisive move to Iena, in 1800, Hegel makes yet another attempt at dynamic conciliation. Man can attain no authentic ethical and self-conscious posture outside the state. But the latter is a 'thought totality', a totality conceived and inhabited by the intellect, almost in the sense of Kant's *praktische Vernunft* ('practical reason or understanding'). Religion, on the other hand, derives its vitality from the human imagination, 'als ein lebendiges, von der Phantasie dargestellt' ('as a living presence, represented by fantasy'). There need be no conflict.

Interwoven with these concerns, in chronologically opaque fragments, are the germs of a theory of tragedy. One of these, which will become vital when we come to Kierkegaard's 'counter-Hegelian' *Antigone*, relates to the figure of Abraham. Abraham has cut himself off from his homeland, from his kindred, from nature itself. His monotheism is alienation and the blind acceptance of dictates whose moral imperative and rationale is wholly, inaccessibly external to himself (again, there is here a polemic against Kant). Judaism incarnates this abandonment of man's inmost 'to an alien transcendence'. It is, in consequence, the antithesis to the Greek ideal of 'unison with life'. In particular, Abraham's concepts of destiny is antithetical to that of the ancient Greeks (fragments 371–2 in Nohl's edition). It is a destiny which comports the pathos of sterile alienation, not the essential fruitfulness of tragedy. Hence the arresting fact that Judaism sensibility, with its millennial immersion in suffering, does not produce tragic drama.

The latter hinges on certain particular, Hellenic conceptions of *Gesetz* ('law') and *Strafe* ('punishment'), conceptions grounded in the uniquely agonistic relation of Athenian man to himself, to nature and to the gods. It is in the period from 1797 to late 1799, in such fragments as N.280 and N.393, that a theory of tragedy is incipient. It is to *μοῖρα*, with its dynamic impersonality but existential immanence, that Hegel seems to attach the paradoxical but decisive category of 'fated guilt', of an order of culpability in and through which an individual (the tragic hero) comes wholly into his own – comes home *fatally* to himself without relinquishing,

as does the Jewish sufferer, his at-oneness with life. Hegel ponders Sophocles, Hölderlin's early experiments in tragic form, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the treatment of the collision between familial bonds and civic ritual in Goethe's *Iphigenie*. It is difficult to schematize successive moments or motifs in Hegel's thought at this stage. The principal points are these: all conflict entails division and self-division. Conflict and collision are necessary attributes of the deployment of individual and public identity. But as 'life' cannot, finally, divide itself, as unity is the goal of authentic being, conflict causes tragic guilt. For a time (the notion dates back to Berne), Hegel seems to suggest that this inevitable culpability can be transcended by 'die schöne Seele' ('the beauteous soul'), of which Christ or Hölderlin's Hyperion are exemplary. In the 'beauteous soul', conflict and suffering even unto death do not comport an alienation from existential unity. But Hegel soon relinquishes this suggestion. If it is to find self-realization, human consciousness, certainly in the 'heroic' and, therefore, historically representative man or woman, must first pass 'par ce crépuscule du matin qu'est la conscience malheureuse' ('through that morning twilight which is the unhappy conscience and consciousness').⁷ In doing so, it will risk, indeed it will assure, its own ruin. In the midst of 'the silence of the oracles and the chill of the statues rises the voice of tragedy'.⁸ But such ruin is instrumental in the preservation and animation of the equilibrium between religion and state. It is an indispensable moment in the self-realization of Spirit in history. Though in a more tentative formulation, these appear to be the lineaments of a theory of tragedy as Hegel sketches it immediately before and during the start of his Jena period. Almost self-evidently, they point to Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

It is, in fact, this play which Hegel refers to in his first more extensive text on tragedy. The passage is to be found in the treatise *Ueber die wissenschaftliche Behandlung des Naturrechts* of 1802.⁹ It is of extreme obscurity. It seems to reflect that 'apocalyptic sense of contemporary events' which Rosenzweig ascribes to Hegel's thought between 1800 and Napoleon's temporary destruction of Prussia in 1806. The fundamental issue is plain enough: it is that of the possibility and nature of the dynamics of mediation as between the individual and the nation-state. Kant and Schelling had remained in the idealized, inert sphere of universalized legalism. But by 1801, in the *Schrift ueber die Reichsverfassung*, Hegel had come to identify the highest human freedom with the most comprehensive and organic form of civic community ('die höchste Gemeinschaft'). But this identification also entailed a polemic, agonistic, self-divisive relation between a man as a 'state-being' (*staatlich*) and as a 'burgher' or citizen-bourgeois with essentially familial, economic and self-conservative motivations. How is the philosopher, the thinker of dialectical totality, to integrate these two axes of being? He does so by

looking to Greek tragedy, in which both the conflict and its dynamic resolution are, incomparably, delineated.

The internal division of the *πόλις* into colliding interests (*Stände* or *états* in the sense dramatized by the French Revolution) is equivalent to, is the source of, 'the enactment of tragedy in the ethical sphere'. In this sphere, there must be a *staatsfreier Bezirk*, a domain free from the absolute authority of the state, though definable and meaningful only within the state's larger compass. The state, which Hegel now sees as a *Kriegstaat*, a 'war-state', is in creative conflict with the domain of *Privatrecht*, 'private right', whose primary impulses are not those of war and of civic sacrifice in battle, but of the preservation of the family. Inevitably, the state will seek to absorb this familial sphere into its own governance and order of values. Yet if it did so completely, it would destroy not only the individual but the procreative units from which it draws its military-political resources. Thus the state, even in the moment of conflict, will 'concede divine honours' to the domestic, ethically private dimension of existence.

This is a suggestive and intelligible scheme. Hegel now obscures it to the point of near-impenetrability by attaching it to a tentative metaphysical or ontological design. The division between *πόλις* and individual itself reflects the engagement of 'the Absolute' in temporality and in phenomenal contingencies. Of this engagement, the antique deities are, as it were, the vehicle and symbol. Their implication in human moral conflicts causes a self-scission in the nature of the divine: as between the concrete dictates and executive powers of justice represented by the Eumenides, and the 'indifferent light' or dispassionate oneness of the Absolute which is symbolized by Apollo. Athena's intervention in the trial of Orestes, and the fact that the votes cast are equally divided, make possible two decisive moments in the dialectic: the reconciliation between unity and division (or 'embodiment') in the nature of the divine, and the acceptance and recognition by the *πόλις* of its own relation to the 'harmonious opposition' of the gods.

The convolution of this text results not only from the imposition of an essentially immanent-political discourse on a transcendent symbolism awkwardly poised between strands in Hegel's thought which go back to Berne and even Tübingen on the one hand, and the as yet diffuse idiom of his mature philosophy on the other. The obscurity results from the interference-effects of two very different literary sources. The ontological-symbolic nebulosities and the motif of divine commingling in human polemics (a motif central to Hölderlin) do point to the *Eumenides*. The scenario of collision between *Kriegstaat* and *Privatmensch* springs directly from *Antigone*. It is the latter, moreover, which pervades the context of Hegel's discussion and which is ubiquitously implicit even where Aeschylus' drama is alluded to.

Immediately prior to the passage we have been looking at, Hegel makes a major point: *Sittlichkeit* ('ethics', 'morality grounded in custom') concedes an important portion of its own rights to 'the subterranean powers, relinquishing something of itself to them, and offering them sacrifice'. This concession and offering fulfils a complex dual function: it recognizes the *Recht des Todes* ('the rights of Death') and, at the same time, discriminates, distances these rights from the ethical-political arbitration of the living. Somewhat later in Hegel's essay, we learn that the family is the highest totality 'of which nature is capable', that the generation of children within the family is the modus of reproduction of 'totality' itself, a modus constantly and legitimately challenged by the bellicose ideals of the state. All this directs us not to the *Eumenides* but to *Antigone*. As does the proposition, at the most opaque point in the passage cited, that only the death of the tragic hero can make intelligible (can bring about?) the unification of the riven nature or duplicity of the gods when these are enmeshed and disseminated in mortal collision ('in die Differenz verwickelt').

In other words: at the point in 1802 in which he is writing about natural law, Hegel is profoundly involved in those specific themes of conflict between nation-state and family, between the rights of the living and those of the dead, between legislative fiat and customary ethics, which will be fundamental to the *Phenomenology*. And it is in Sophocles' *Antigone* that these conflicts are, primordially, set forth. It may be, as Lukács argues,¹⁰ that the *Eumenides* reference and the related darkness in the text represent a last attempt to 'dehistoricize' the political issues, to establish a continuity between antique and modern as Hölderlin was striving to do. After 1802, however, no such 'dehistoricization' is possible for Hegel. The Napoleonic adventure, to which Hegel assigns an absolute metaphysical singularity, has made of the new nation-state the Apollonian *Lichtgott*, 'the Light-god' who must find fulfilment and self-renewal in war. πόλεμος, on the Napoleonic scale, is the public radiance of man. But what, in this imperial scheme, are the rights of the subterranean and nocturnal agencies of familial kinship and of death? Tragedy stems from the postulate and sublation of these antinomies. In *Antigone* the logic of revelation in tragic form is consummate. Thus the passage from the *Eumenides* to *Antigone* is neither accidental nor, in any primary sense, autobiographical. It articulates the essential step from Hegel's juvenilia to the *Phenomenology*.¹¹

The presence of *Antigone* in the *Phenomenology* has often been noted.¹² It has not been studied in detail. Yet it constitutes no less remarkable an incorporation of a work of art into a philosophic discourse than does that of Homer in Plato or of Mozart's operas in Kierkegaard. As such, Hegel's uses of Sophocles are not only immediately pertinent to a study of the 'Antigone' motif in Western thought; they document

the whole central issue of hermeneutics, of the nature and conventions of understanding. Here, in the face of a rarely equalled force of appropriation, we can attempt to follow the life of a major text within a major text and the metamorphic exchanges of meaning which this internality brings about. If the *Phenomenology* itself is, notably in its first six sections, dramatically constructed, it is, in significant degree, because it has great drama as its core of reference.¹³

With Jamesian obliqueness, Hegel will name Antigone twice only. But beginning with section V (C, a), her presence is vivid. It is in this segment that Hegel spells out the axiom of existentialism. Being is a 'pure translation' (*reines Uebersetzen*) of potential being into action, into 'the doing of the deed' (*das Tun der Tat*). No individual can attain an authentic knowledge of himself 'ehe es sich durch Tun zur Wirklichkeit gebracht hat' ('until it has brought itself into actuality through action'). The translation is one from 'the night of possibility into the day of presentness'; it is an awakening into the dawnlight of the deed of that which was the latency, the slumber of the self. This is the break of morning and of action for Antigone. The purpose of the existential act must be that of a total 'coming into being', of an accomplishment so central that it cannot be mere external 'facticity' (*eine Sache*). If the deed is merely self-interested, if to act is only to 'busy oneself', 'others will hasten to it as flies to a freshly set out bowl of milk' (with which image Ismene seems to enter the argument). The authentic act of self-realization is equivalent to 'die *sittliche Substanz*' – the 'ethical substance' or 'morality as substantive performance'. To inquire of the justification or compass of this ethical substance, to challenge its enactment in the name of external criteria, is vanity. Enter Creon.

Yet, 'in its purest and most meaningful form', in its most evident rationality, ethical action is the 'intelligible, general doing of the state' (*das verständige allgemeine Tun des Staats*). The result is an ambiguity of necessary guilt. Translation into authentic individual being demands the existential deed. Man is nothing but 'l'œuvre qu'il a réalisée' ('the work he has fulfilled').¹⁴ But in so far as individual action is not that of the rational state, it may or may not have substantive reality; it may or may not be justifiable. Being quintessentially *his*, the deed of the individual will bring him into collision with the rational norm of realized purpose ('policy') in the state. In riposte, the latter will oppose law ('Gesetz') to inner imperative ('Gebot'). Where this opposition is forced to extremity, there will be a violent emptiness or 'formality' in the law and a self-destructive autonomy, an imperative of and for the self alone, in the individual. Let Sophocles' play begin.

The collision has its concrete source in two dialectical moments. The one is 'the tyrannical blasphemy or sin which makes of wilfulness a law' and which would compel the ethical substance to obey this law. The

second moment is a subtler evil: it is the 'testing of the law' through 'the blasphemy or sin of knowing' (*Frevel des Wissens*, a formidable phrase), which 'reasons itself free from the law' and takes the latter to be a contingent, alien arbitrariness. Note the deliberate ambivalence of Hegel's formulation. If the first moment applies unmistakably to Creon, the second tells of both Creon and Antigone, though the verb *räsonieren* points to Creon rather than to Antigone. This pointer becomes a brilliant stab of light in the portrait of Antigone with which section V of the *Phenomenology* closes.

Ethical substance can only be grasped by self-consciousness; it can only become self-substance, in the individual human person. Ethical substance and personal being are made tautological in men or women who are 'lucid unto themselves, who are unripened spirits'. Such men or women are 'makellose himmlische Gestalten, die in ihren Unterschieden die unentweihete Unschuld und Einmütigkeit ihres Wesens erhalten'. The sentence is of an exalted density and theological tonality which make translation halting: 'immaculate celestial types or presences, who preserve within their differences and divisions of self the never-deconsecrated innocence and integrity of their being'. Such men and women simply *are* ('Sie *sind*, und weiter nichts' – a lapidary proposition which contains the heart of Heideggerian and Sartrean ontology). Now, for the first time, Hegel names and cites the play (lines 456–7). And reiterates: 'Sie *sind*.' For such men and women, the right (*das Rechte*) is the absolute, disinterested substance of existence. The section closes imperatively: 'dieses aber ist *ihre Wirklichkeit und Dasein, ihre Selbst und Willen*' ('but this [the right] is *their actuality and being, their self and will*'). Antigone stands before us as she had not done since Sophocles.

She is, of course, a Hegelian Antigone. Pellucid to herself, in possession of and possessed by the deed which is her being, this Antigone *lives* the ethical substance. In her, 'the Spirit is made actual'. But the ethical substance which Hegel's Antigone embodies, which she *is* purely and simply, represents a polarization, an inevitable partiality. The Absolute suffers division as it enters into the necessary but fragmented dynamics of the human and historical condition. The Absolute *must* descend, as it were, into the contingent, bounded specificities of the individual human ethos if that ethos is to attain self-fulfilment, if the journey homeward and to ultimate unity is to be pursued. But in the process of 'descent', of polemic deconstruction, the 'ethical world' is riven between immanent and transcendent polarities (*die in das Diesseits und Jenseits zerrissene Welt*). 'Sie spaltet sich also in ein unterschiedenes sittliches Wesen, in ein menschliches und göttliches Gesetz' ('It divides itself and crystallizes around the antinomies of human and of divine law'). Because he is the medium of this scission, man must undergo the agonistic character of the ethical-dialectical experience and be destroyed by it. Yet

it is precisely this destruction, Hegel reminds us, which constitutes man's eminent worth and which allows his progression towards the unification of consciousness and of Spirit on 'the other side of history'.

Hegel's next step is not primarily logical; it is a conjecture essential to his poetics of individuation and historicism. The division between divine and human laws does not assume the form of a direct confrontation between men and gods, as it may be said to do in Aeschylus' *Prometheus* or Euripides' *Bacchae*. Because it is now entirely immanent in the human circumstance, the ethical substance polarizes its values and its imperatives as between the state and the family. It is in the family that divine law has a threefold status: it is 'natural', it is 'unconscious', and it is of the 'folk-world' (the key phrases are: '*natürliches Gemeinwesen*', '*bewusstloser Begriff*', and '*das Element der Wirklichkeit des Volks dem Volke selbst*'). This status is unavoidably adversary to that of the divine law as its functions in the religion of the πόλις. 'La Famille s'oppose à l'Etat comme les Pénates aux Dieux de la cité' ('The family is opposed to the state as are the Penates to the gods of the city').¹⁵ This opposition finds its pivotal manifestation in the burial of the dead. It is around this motif, and its dramatization in *Antigone*, that Hegel now concentrates the existential dualities of man and society, of the living and the dead, of the immanent and the transcendent, which underlie the *Phenomenology*.

Within the family, the commanding agencies of consciousness are those of relationship to individualized particularity. It is the specific persona which is conceived as totality. To it is assigned a weight of presentness denied to the 'generalized individuality' of the citizen in the perspective of the state. Death, as it were, 'specifies this specificity' in the highest degree. It is the extreme accomplishment of the unique (as in the Kierkegaardian-Heideggerian postulate of one's *own* death, inalienable to any other). 'Death is the fulfilment and highest labour' an individual takes upon himself. As we shall see, this 'achieved totality' may be, indeed ought to be, expressly civic, as is death in the war-service to the nation. But *in death*, the individual reverts 'immensely – the epithet is meant to suggest the radical vehemence of Hegel's vision – to the ethical domain of the family. The πόλις, moreover, 's'intéresse au Tun, à l'action de l'individu, tandis que la Famille attribue une valeur à son Sein, à son être pur et simple' (the state 'concerns itself with the deed, with the action of the individual, whereas the family attributes value to his being, to his *existence* pure and simple').¹⁶ It is this root-difference between a political and an ontological valuation which determines the primacy of burial.

In this primacy, the question of the actual preservation of the body from physical decay (Polynices' unburied corpse) takes on a fundamental role:

The dead individual, by having detached and liberated his being from his action or negative unity, is an empty particular, merely existing passively for some other, at the level of every lower irrational organic agency. . . . The family keeps away from the dead the dishonouring of him by the appetites of unconscious organic agencies and by abstract [chemical] elements. It sets its own action in place of theirs, and it weds the relative to the bosom of the earth, the elemental presence which does not pass away. Thereby the family makes of the dead a member of a communal totality (*eines Gemeinwesens*) which is stronger than, which maintains control over the powers of the particular material elements and lower living creatures, both of which sought to have their way with the dead and to destroy him. . . . This final duty thus constitutes the complete *divine* law or positive *ethical* act towards the particular individual.

The esoteric concreteness of Hegel's vision reanimates, as does almost no other commentary on *Antigone*, the primal dread of decomposition, of violation by dogs and birds of prey, central to the play. It knits the family to precisely the two sources or moments of Antigone's deed: 'the essence of divine law and the realm below the earth'.

Inside the family, continues Hegel, one relationship is privileged above all others by virtue of the immediacy and purity of its ethical substance. It is that between brother and sister. Again, Hegel's contracted, lyric argument is shot through with the presence of Antigone. Brother and sister are of the same blood, as husband and wife are not. There is between them no compulsion of sexuality or, if there is such compulsion (Hegel implicitly concedes the possibility), it has been overcome. In the relation between parents and children there is reciprocal self-interest – the parents seek a reproduction and continuation of their own being – and inevitable estrangement. This relation, moreover, is ineluctably organic. Brother and sister stand towards each other in the disinterested purity of free human choice. Their affinity transcends the biological to become elective. Femininity itself, urges Hegel, has its highest intimation, its moral quintessence, in the condition of sorority (*Das Weibliche hat daher als Schwester die höchste Ahnung des sittlichen Wesens*). The sister's view of her brother is ontological as no other can be: it is his being, his existence in and of itself, to which she assigns irreplaceable worth. Correspondingly, there can be no higher ethical obligation than that which a sister incurs towards her brother.

But in fulfilling his identity as citizen, in performing the deeds which realize his manhood, the brother must leave the sphere of the family. He leaves the hearth (*οἶκος*) for the world of the *πόλις*. Woman stays behind as 'head of the household and guardian of the divine law' in so far as this law is polarized in the household gods, the Lares and Penates.

The ethical kingdom of woman is that of the 'immediately elemental'. It is a kingdom of custodianship (of 'negativity', in Hegel's special vocabulary) necessarily antinomian to the destructive positivity of the political. 'La loi humaine est la loi du jour parce qu'elle est connue, publique, visible, universelle: elle règle non pas la famille mais la cité, le gouvernement, la guerre; et elle est faite par l'homme (vir). La loi humaine est la loi de l'homme. La loi divine est la loi de la femme, elle se cache, ne s'offre pas dans cette ouverture de manifestation (*Offenbarkeit*) qui produit l'homme. Elle est nocturne . . .' (*Human law is the law of day because it is known, public, visible, universal: it does not regulate the family but the city-state, the government, warfare; and this law is made by man (vir). Human law is man's law. Divine law is the law of woman; it hides itself: it does not body itself forth in that openness of appearance (*Offenbarkeit*) which produces man. It is of the night . . .*).¹⁷ Derrida's gloss is eloquent; but it also reflects a common misunderstanding. It is only on the 'historical' level that the agonistic encounter is between 'human' and 'divine' laws. The polarization merely 'phenomenalizes' the self-scission of the Absolute. If there is divinity in the household gods, under feminine guard, so there is also in the gods of the city and in the legislature which masculine force has established around them. Hence the tragic ambiguity of collision.

Hegel is now ready to take his final dialectic step. In death, the husband, son or brother passes from the dominion of the πόλις back into that of the family. This homecoming is, specifically and concretely, a return into the primal custody of woman (wife, mother, sister). The rites of burial, with their literal re-enclosure of the dead in the place of earth and in the shadow-sequence of generations which are the foundation of the familial, are the particular task of woman. Where this task falls upon a sister, where a man has neither mother nor wife to bring him home to the guardian earth, burial takes on the highest degree of holiness. Antigone's act is the holiest to which woman can accede. It is also *ein Verbrechen*: a crime. For there are situations in which the state is not prepared to relinquish its authority over the dead. There are circumstances – political, military, symbolic – in which the laws of the πόλις extend to the dead body the imperatives of honour (ceremonious interment, monumentality) or of chastisement which, ordinarily, pertain only to the living. Hence a final, supreme clash between the worlds of man and woman. The dialectic of collision between the universal and the particular, the sphere of the feminine hearth and of the masculine forum, the polarities of ethical substance as they crystallize around immanent and transcendent values – is now compacted into the struggle between man (Creon) and woman (Antigone) over the body of the dead (Polyneices). The mere fact that such a struggle takes place defines the guilt of woman in the eyes of the πόλις. 'La Femme est la réalisation concrète

du crime. L'ennemi intérieur de l'Etat antique est la Famille qu'il détruit et le Particulier qu'il ne reconnaît pas; mais il ne peut se passer d'eux' ('Woman is the concrete embodiment of crime. The family is the internal foe of the antique state; the family which this state destroys and the private person which it does not recognize; but it cannot do without them').¹⁸

Innocence is irreconcilable with human action; but only in action is there moral identity. Antigone is guilty. Creon's edict is a political punishment; to Antigone it is an ontological crime. Polyneices' guilt towards Thebes is totally irrelevant to her existential sense of his singular, irreplaceable being. The *Sein* of her brother cannot, in any way, be qualified by his *Tun*. Death is, precisely, the return from action into being. In taking upon herself the inevitable guilt of action, in opposing the feminine-ontological to the masculine-political. Antigone stands above Oedipus: her 'crime' is fully conscious. It is an act of self-possession even before it is an acceptance of destiny.

Schicksal (*fatum*) now enters Hegel's reading of the play. Antigone and Creon must both perish inasmuch as they have yielded their being to the necessary partialities of action. It is in this exact sense that character, that individuation is destiny. 'The opposition of the ethical powers to one another, and the process whereby individualities enact these powers in life and deed, have reached their true end only in so far as both sides undergo the same destruction. . . . The victory of one power and its character, and the defeat of the other side, would thus be only the partial, the unfinished work which progresses steadily till equilibrium is attained. It is in the equal subjection of both sides that absolute right is first accomplished, that the ethical substance – as the negative force consuming both parties, in other words, omnipotent and righteous Destiny – makes its appearance.' The identification of this reading with the schematic triad of thesis–antithesis–synthesis is an over-simplification (this triad is Fichte's rather than Hegel's). Nevertheless, we recognize in this metaphysics of fatal equilibrium the essence of the Hegelian concept of dialectic, of historical advance through tragic pathos. Kojève's summation renders the poignant rigour of Hegel's 'Antigone': 'Le conflit tragique n'est pas un conflit entre le Devoir et la Passion, ou entre deux Devoirs. C'est le conflit entre deux plans d'existence, dont l'un est considéré comme sans valeur par celui qui agit, mais non par les autres. L'agent, l'acteur tragique n'aura pas conscience d'avoir agi comme un criminel; étant châtié, il aura l'impression de subir un "destin", absolument injustifiable, mais qu'il admet sans révolte, "sans chercher à comprendre"' ('Tragic conflict is not a conflict between duty and passion, or between two duties. It is a conflict between two planes of being, which one of those who acts regards as valueless, but which is recognized by others. The tragic agent, the tragic actor will not be conscious of having acted

as a criminal; being punished, he will have the impression of suffering a "destiny" which is absolutely unjustifiable, but against which he does not rebel, which he accepts "without seeking to understand"').¹⁹

Thus there is, in the calm of doom, parity. But the equation is not one of *indifference*. Antigone possesses an insight into the quality of her own guilt which is denied to Creon. The body of Polyneices *had* to be buried if the πόλις of the living was to be at peace with the house of the dead. Derrida's conjecture, so far as it bears on the Hegel of the *Phenomenology*, is tempting: if the role of God in the speculative dialectic is, most probably, masculine, God's irony and self-division, the infinite disquiet of his essence, are, possibly, those of woman.²⁰ All honour to Antigone.

Ironically, it is not with this profoundly original, delicate exegesis that one commonly associates Hegel's general theory of tragedy or particular interpretation of *Antigone*. It is later readings which achieve notoriety and which initiate debates that continue to this day. These later readings are, doubtless, related to the *Phenomenology*. But they represent a more abstract, silhouetted mode of understanding. The canonic text comes in Part Two (II.3.a) of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

Fatum is that which is stripped of thought, of the concept; it is that in which justice and injustice disappear in abstraction. In tragedy, on the contrary, destiny operates within a sphere of *ethical Justice*. We find this expressed in its noblest form in the tragedies of Sophocles. In these both fate and necessity are at issue. The fate of individuals is represented as something incomprehensible, but necessity is not a blind justice; it is, on the contrary, perceived to be true justice. Just for this reason, these tragedies are the immortal 'works of Spirit' (*Geisteswerke*) of ethical understanding and comprehension, and the undying paradigm of the ethical concept. Blind fate is something unsatisfying. In these Sophoclean tragedies, justice is grasped by thought. The collision between the two highest moral powers is enacted in plastic fashion in that absolute *exemplum* of tragedy, *Antigone*. Her, familial love, the holy, the inward, belonging to inner feeling, and therefore known also as the law of the nether gods, collides with the right of the state (*Recht des Staats*). Creon is not a tyrant, but actually an ethical power (*eine sittliche Macht*). Creon is not in the wrong. He maintains that the law of the state, the authority of government, must be held in respect, and that infraction of the law must be followed by punishment. Each of these two sides actualizes (*verwirklicht*) only one of the ethical powers, and has only one as its content. This is their one-sidedness. The

meaning of eternal justice is made manifest thus: both attain injustice just because they are one-sided, but both also attain justice. Both are recognized as valid in the 'unclouded' course and process of morality (*im ungetrübten Gang der Sittlichkeit*). Here both possess their validity, but an *equalized validity*. Justice only comes forward to oppose one-sidedness.

From this passage are derived the notion of tragedy as a conflict between two equal 'rights' or 'truths' and the belief that Sophocles' *Antigone* illustrates, in some obvious way, the dynamics of collision and 'synthetic resolution' in the Hegelian dialectic. The flat proposition, moreover, that 'Creon is not a tyrant', that his person and conduct embody *eine sittliche Macht* is often cited to evidence Hegel's turn to an *étatiste* or 'Prussian' philosophy of the nation-state.

The text is highly condensed (resulting, as it does, from the transcription of lecture-notes). It presumes knowledge of the symbolic ontology of the self-scission of the Absolute as it is expounded in the *Phenomenology*, and of Hegel's early theory of punishment as a 'tragic necessity' in the dialectic of heroic self-fulfilment. And if there is, undeniably, a turn to authoritarian prudence in Hegel's personal-philosophic stance, there is, also, an attempt to articulate a logic of active poise, of what Kierkegaard will call 'motion on one spot'.

Napoleon's defeat or, rather, self-defeat, Napoleon's recession from a metaphysical into a political-contingent force, signifies the adjournment (the end?) of the original Hegelian finality. Spirit and history are not yet (are never?) to be made one. Man cannot pass from the realm of the state to the realm of the Spirit. It is within the realm of the state that he must pursue his homeward journey. But the impulse to this pursuit is, as we know, polemic. It is solely in and through conflict that (heroic) man or woman initiates those explorations of moral values, those sublations (*Aufhebungen*) of rudimentary contradictions into subtler, more comprehensive dissents, which alone activate human ethical advance. Antigone *must* challenge Creon if she is to be Antigone, if he is to be Creon. Her 'ethical superiority', in respect of the immediacy, of the primal character and purity of familial-feminine law, must both be made manifest *and* destroyed by the law of the state.²¹ If Antigone were to triumph, if the private dimension of human needs were to demolish the public, there could be no progress. There could, quite simply, be no locale for meaningful, which is to say tragic, collision.

The young Hegel had perceived the inherent contradictoriness of being itself. After the *Phenomenology* and in the years of self-debate which lead to the Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia* of 1817, Hegel centres this general concept of internal contradiction in the notion of the state and in that of the relations between state and individual. It is only *within* the *Staat* and

by virtue of tragic conflict *with* the state – the two being logically bound – that external and internal morality can be defined, actualized, and thus brought nearer to the unity of the Absolute. Rosenzweig's formulation is rhetorical but accurate: 'At the outset stood the birth-pangs of a human soul, at the end stands Hegel's philosophy of the State.'²²

Hence the imperative of equilibrium, of equalization as between the univocal or one-dimensional parties to moral collision (Marcuse's idiom is, of course, explicitly Hegelian). If Creon was only or essentially a tyrant, he would not be worthy of Antigone's challenger; he would not, in Heidegger's transcription, be authentically 'questionable' (*frag-würdig*). If he did not incarnate an ethical principle, his defeat would possess neither tragic quality nor constructive sense. In Sophocles' exemplary rendition, this defeat, in exact counterpoise to Antigone's, entails progress. *After* the deaths of Antigone and of Creon, new conflicts will spring from the division within the *πόλις* of the 'ethical substance'. But these conflicts, so far as they concern the private and the public, the familial and the civic, the prerogatives of the dead and those of the living, will be enacted on a richer level of consciousness, of felt contradiction, than that which arose from the corpse of Polyneices. In other words: in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel is attempting to spell out the paradox of 'divisive unity' essential to his whole logic of the positivity of negation. He seeks to articulate the device of a conflict *in extremis* which, at the same time, vitalizes, strengthens the object of its mortal provocation (the state). He is trying to preserve two opposing categories indispensable to the dialectic: primordial stasis, the realm of the underworld and of woman, and the dynamics of history. The result is a deceptively brutal reading.

The formal and structural compulsions which underlie this reading translate readily into aesthetic judgment. In the *Aesthetik* (Part Three, III, ch. 3, iii. a), Hegel proclaims Sophocles' *Antigone* to be 'of all splendours of the ancient and of the modern world . . . the pre-eminent, the most satisfying work of art'. The context makes plain that this supremacy stems directly from the precise equipoise of motive and destiny as it is realized in the executive form and content of the play. It is in the absolute parity of tension and disaster achieved by Sophocles that Hegel finds harmonious proof of his central postulate of the agonistic nature of human consciousness. Like no other text, *Antigone* makes 'actual and true' the symmetries of significant deaths. But despite its logical and aesthetic strength – a strength which will make of it the official Hegelian interpretation – this whole analysis is radically at odds with the sensibility of the later Hegel, with the bias of spirit which he brings to the play. The sentiments voiced about the fate and stature of Antigone herself in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (I. 2. b. 3) have a hyperbolic

poignancy. They hint at emotional identifications irreconcilable with the dialectic impartiality of the canonic gloss.

Hegel is considering the phenomenological meaning and role of Socrates. He finds a contradiction in Socrates' attitude towards his own death. The sage had refused the possibility of escape because it seems preferable to him to submit to the laws of the πόλις. Yet at the trial itself and throughout his imprisonment, Socrates has maintained his innocence. In fact, he accepts the legitimacy neither of the sentence nor of the judicial proceedings against him. Antigone's response to her doom is altogether higher. It enacts the homecoming of individual, fragmented consciousness to the coherence of the Absolute. Hegel cites lines 925–6: 'If this seems good to the gods, | We shall, in the course of suffering, be made to understand, to avow our error.' These are the sublime perceptions with which 'the celestial Antigone, the most resplendent (*herrlichste*) figure ever to have appeared on earth' goes to her death. The sacramental overtones in Hegel's idiom are unmistakable. Antigone is set above Socrates, a formidable elevation if we bear in mind the literally talismanic status of Socrates as the wisest and purest of mortals throughout idealist thought and Romantic iconography. But 'the most resplendent figure ever to have appeared on earth' takes us further. The phrasing 'makes it almost impossible not to think of Jesus, and to note that Antigone is here placed above him'.²³ Kierkegaard, too, will sense the blasphemous pathos of this suggestion, only to negate it. This much is clear: Hegel's exaltation of Antigone, whatever its covert 'autobiographical code', whatever its covert affinities to the lasting ambivalence with which Hegel treats Christian revelation, goes beyond even his aesthetic celebration of the play. And it undermines thoroughly the dialectic of perfect equilibrium between Creon and Antigone.

However, it is the latter which achieves rapid and commanding influence. In substance, both the theory of tragedy and the specific analyses of *Antigone* as we know them after the mid-nineteenth century derive from the debate on Hegel. To be more precise: they derive from the contrast between the view put forward by F. Schlegel when he sees Antigone as making 'visible' the divine agency in human guise and by A. W. Schlegel when he pronounces Creon to be criminally at fault on the one hand, and Hegel's symmetrical reading on the other (the latter becomes generally available after the publication of the third part of the *Aesthetik* in 1838).²⁴ From H. F. W. Hinrich's *Das Wesen der antiken Tragödie* of 1827 and August Boeckh's *Ueber die Antigone des Sophokles* of 1824, 1828 onward, the Hegelian current is dominant. It is massively expounded in Fr. Th. Vischer's celebrated *Aesthetik, oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (1846–58). The Hegelian apologia for Creon will not be fundamentally challenged before O. Ribbeck's *Sophokles und seine Tragödien* of 1869 and Wilamowitz-Möllendorff's designation of Antigone's

death as that of a religious martyr in his studies of Greek tragedy towards the end of the century. Modern scholars incline to reject Hegel's interpretation in the seemingly dogmatic, simplified form in which most of them have come to know it. They find it discordant with the spirit of Sophoclean drama and with the literal meanings of the Greek text.²⁵ But this rejection is far from unanimous. A number of the most penetrating of recent studies of *Antigone* are couched in the very terms of the Hegelian scenario. Creon is 'no old fox using his cunning on behalf of might and *raison d'état*' – he is a man 'entranced' (*begeistert*) and wholly possessed by a vision of civic law. This law determines nothing less than the existence of Thebes ('ein Gebot, mit dem die Existenz Thebens nun einmal steht und fällt').²⁶ 'Des deux attitudes religieuses que l'*Antigone* met en conflit', write J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet in the most influential of recent readings, 'aucune ne saurait en elle-même être la bonne sans faire à l'autre sa place, sans reconnaître cela même qui la borne et la conteste' ('of the two religious attitudes which *Antigone* sets at odds, neither could by itself be the right one without reserving a place to the other, without acknowledging the very thing which constrains and opposes it').²⁷

I know of no serious modern reflection on the nature of tragedy, on the paradox of harmony out of terror, which does not have to come to terms with Hegel's 'dualism' (which is both obvious and undeclared in Nietzsche's scheme of Apollonian and Dionysian principles). Max Scheler's well-known statement of the insolubility of essential conflicts within the texture of reality itself and his definition of the tragic are Hegelian to the core: the tragic, says Scheler in his 'Zum Phänomen des Tragischen' of 1914, is a primary 'component of the universe itself'. When we experience tragic drama, an ineluctable constituent 'of the *World* – and not of our ego, of its feelings, of its encounters with pity and fear' is revealed to us. When Scheler speaks of the 'radiant dark which seems to encircle the head of the "tragic hero"', he is echoing Hegel's image of the 'elect of suffering' and of *Antigone* in particular.

Thus we find in Hegel's successive and, at decisive points, internally contrasting interpretations of the *Antigone* of Sophocles one of the high moments in the history of reading. Here 'response' to a classic text engages 'responsibility' ('answerability') of the most vivid moral and intellectual order. The Hegelian *Antigone(s)* stand towards Sophocles' heroine in a relation of transforming echo. It is this relation, with its paradox of fidelity to the source and autonomous counter-statement, which constitutes the vitality of interpretation. On this rare level one can, without irony, compare the hermeneutic with the poetic act.

Notes

1 A. Koyré, 'Hégel à Iéna', in *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris, 1971), 152n. This essay first appeared in 1934. Together with the 'Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégélienne', first published in 1931 and also included in the *Etudes*, it constitutes the most enlightening discussion we have of the difficulties and virtues of Hegel's style. See also T. W. Adorno, 'Skoteinos oder Wie zu lesen sei', *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1963), for a witty, subtle gloss on Hegel's fundamentally oral techniques of persuasion. In approaching the problem of how to read Hegel one cannot, particularly with reference to early writings, overlook a certain deliberate pride in opaqueness: 'Philosophy is by its nature something esoteric, neither made for the mob nor capable of being prepared for the mob', wrote Hegel in 1802.

2 The secondary literature abounds in references to Hegel's views on tragedy. For the English-speaking reader, the best-known treatment is, of course, A. C. Bradley, 'Hegel's Theory of Tragedy' (first published in 1909), in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London, 1950). This lecture, together with the principal discussions of tragedy in Hegel's writings, is available in Hegel, *On Tragedy*, edd. A. and H. Paolucci (New York, 1962). See also L. A. McKay, 'Antigone, Coriolanus and Hegel', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, xciii (1962); and O. Pöggeler, 'Hegel und die griechische Tragödie', *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft I (1964).

3 The writings of the young Hegel are the object of an extensive industry of exegesis and revaluation. They have been made available to us by H. Nohl, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (Tübingen, 1907); G. Lasson, *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie* (Leipzig, 1913); F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat* (Munich and Berlin, 1920); J. Hoffmeister, *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* (Stuttgart, 1936). Among the most useful elucidations are the following: J. Stenzel, 'Hegels Auffassung der griechischen Philosophie', *Kleine Schriften zur griechischen Philosophie* (Darmstadt, 1956); A. Negri, *Stato e diritto ne Giovane Hegel* (Padua, 1958); J. Taminiaux, 'La Pensée esthétique du jeune Hegel', *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, lvi (1958); A. Massolo, *Prime ricerche di Hegel* (Urbino, 1959); A. T. B. Peperzak, *Le Jeune Hegel et la vision morale du monde* (The Hague, 1960); H.-G. Gadamer, 'Hegel und die antike Dialektik', *Hegel-Studien*, i (1961). A number of these monographs themselves contain bibliographies of further secondary material.

4 Hegel's attitudes to Greek antiquity have been extensively studied. See J. Hoffmeister, *Hegel und Hölderlin* (Tübingen, 1931); L. Sichirrollo, 'Hegel und die griechische Welt. Nachleben der Antike und Entstehung der "Philosophie der Weltgeschichte"', *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft I (1964); A. Banfi, *Incontro con Hegel* (Urbino, 1965); J. Glenn Gray, *Hegel and Greek Thought* (New York, 1941; 1968); J. d'Hondt (ed.), *Hegel et la pensée grecque* (Paris, 1974); D. Janicaud, *Hegel et le destin de la Grèce* (Paris, 1975).

5 G. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (first published in 1948; now vol. viii of the *Werke* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1976)), 494.

6 Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, p. 114.

7 J. Wahl, *Le Malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris, 1929), 188.

8 *ibid.* 67.

9 G. Lasson (ed.), *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 384-5.

10 Cf. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel*, 500-1.

11 For further discussion of this obscure, transitional text, cf. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, pp. 162–7.

12 See *inter alia*, W. Kaufmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, texts and Commentary* (New York, 1965), 142–6.

13 The *Phenomenology* has, of course, generated a large secondary literature. It has, in particular, induced two of the most important acts of close reading in modern philosophic literature: J. Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel* (Paris, 1946), and A. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris, 1947). In its fragmentary form – the text, though massive, is made up of the notes taken by members of Kojève's famous Hegel seminars between 1933 and 1939 – this masterpiece represents both an acute commentary on and a virtual parallel to the *Phenomenology*. A further attempt at 'counter-statement' in the guise of marginal commentary is made by Jacques Derrida in *Glas* (Paris, 1974). Often wildly self-indulgent and arbitrary, Derrida's 'gloss' does, at several points, offer important insights. Together, these three books, and the reticulations of their positions towards Hegel, almost make up a history of post-war French philosophic and stylistic sensibility.

14 Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, p. 92.

15 *ibid.*, 100.

16 *ibid.*

17 Derrida, *Glas*, p. 161.

18 Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 105.

19 *ibid.*, 102. See, by contrast, Derrida's fantasticalities regarding the dangers of cannibalism and vampirism to which Polyneices' corpse is exposed. Their suppositions lead to the identification of Antigone with the love-and-death goddess Cybele (*Glas*, 163–6, 210).

20 See Derrida, *Glas*, 211.

21 Cf. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel*, 511.

22 Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, 188. See also pp. 99–101 for an inspired, if somewhat uncritical, summation of Hegel's concept of the state.

23 Kaufmann, *Hegel*, p. 273.

24 See E. Eberlein, 'Über die verschiedenen Deutungen des tragischen Konflikts in der Tragödie "Antigone" des Sophokles', *Gymnasium*, lxxviii (1961).

25 See C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford, 1944), 67; K. Reinhardt, *Sophokles* (3rd edn, Frankfurt-on-Main, 1947), 78; W. Jens, 'Antigone-Interpretationen', in *Satura, Früchte aus der antiken Welt. Otto Weinreich zum 13. März 1951 dargebracht* (Baden-Baden, 1952), 47 and 58; V. Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford, 1954), 31; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (University of California Press, 1971), 116ff.

26 G. Nebel, *Weltangst und Götterzorn: eine Deutung der griechischen Tragödie* (Stuttgart, 1951), 181.

27 J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1977), 34.

Hegel's *Phenomenology*: an elegy for Hellas

Judith N. Shklar

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a whole is an immense funeral oration at the graveside of speculative philosophy. Inevitably the Greeks dominated Hegel's remembrances, for they had begun, set the ends and determined the form of that search for certain knowledge which had now been completed. It was now possible to know what knowing was, because in looking back one could recognize that knowledge was the collective creation of those who had tried to find it. Retrospection was the only certain knowledge, because it alone could reveal that men had made their knowledge and that it was the work of their own minds, and not an object to be seized. Since knowing was self-creation, it had now become self-understanding. Remembering alone could now yield that certainty that an entire literary culture had, through the medium of a shared language, struggled for. Hegel saw spiritual history as Aristotle had seen nature. It was the gradual process, by no means painless or peaceful, by which half-truths had overcome each other to reach an end that was implicit in the origin and which determined the structure of every form of thought.¹ Because the whole is now achieved, it can be understood. The kind of reconstruction offered by a funeral oration was now in order: an account of the deeds and works which reveal the meaning and purpose of the life now at an end.

Hegel was convinced that his was an age of transition.² The French and Kantian Revolutions had brought to an end the old ethical, religious and intellectual order. A new age had been born, but it was impossible to know what form it would take. Hegel was no crystal-gazer. Instead, he devoted himself to recapturing and reliving the past, to knowing what it was possible to know perfectly. It was his answer to the old question: 'What is knowing?' This mnemonic exercise not only had to begin in Greece, but had to follow through all the explicit and implicit generative ideas, especially of Plato and Aristotle, which had shaped the entire

literary culture and philosophic language of Europe. In this collective enterprise their influence had never been absent entirely. Hegel was often very critical of Greek philosophy, especially where social ideas were involved, and his remembrances are not untinged with justice. To be sure their defects were creative, a spur to renewed intellectual effort, but Hegel did not spare them. The Greek philosophers were recalled as philosophers deserve to be remembered, with an often unflattering devotion to truth. No such judgment, however, impinged upon Hegel's vision of the ethical spirit of the ancient city as he glimpsed it through dramatic literature. Here he could feel pure regret, a sense of loss for a unique moment that could only inspire admiration and possibly serve as a model for new effort. Here was a real threnody, and it gives the whole *Phenomenology* its elegiac tone.

The funeral oration for philosophy dwells directly on political ideas only occasionally, but they are never wholly absent. For Hegel was not remembering individual men or reviewing the 'great books'. He was recalling the transforming 'moments' of collective thought. The spiritual adventure which had begun in Greece and which was now completed and ready to be grasped by the retrospective understanding had engaged generations of thinking and communicating men. It was not a matter of successive individual works. Hegel very rarely names a philosopher, and then only by way of illustration. The general form, trend and end of the search for certain knowledge and the immanent logic of its development comprise a collaborative effort. As such it is social by definition. The ancients were unique, certainly, in having begun, and then inspired, the whole at every turn. It is their creative impulse that has now been fulfilled in the modern age, after the long medieval silence. The phenomena of the classical spirit were not purely individual manifestations, however. Socrates expresses the individualism of the decayed polis.³ Stoicism is the voice of men living under Roman imperial rule.⁴ There is, of course, no crude linking of ideas and events in a chain of effective causality. Both are integral parts of a single process, the awareness of which is expressed in language which, as Hegel insisted often, is a social creation, the great bond of the spiritual community. A few years later he was to remark that grammar as such, and Greek grammar especially, had made abstract, conceptual thinking possible at all.⁵

The communality of rational thought would itself suffice to make political ideas major phenomena of the human spirit. There is, however, an additional, more specific reason for their importance. Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a massive assault upon the 'subjectivity' of individualism, both epistemological and social. From the first rather flippant remarks about the upside-down world of Platonism to the polemic against Kantian morality, individualism is the notion that has to be overcome. The greatest single obstacle to the quest for certain knowledge is the view of men as

discrete entities, each one of whom must find his ends somewhere out there, when in reality they are together the creators of their selves and their common world. Neither Plato nor Aristotle is, therefore, beyond censure. Their incompleteness was, of course, necessary, and Hegel was not grading the truth or errors of the past, but tracing the immanent necessities of philosophical change.⁶

The flaws that drove European philosophy restlessly ahead seemed especially evident to Hegel in Platonism. Generally he repeated Aristotle's criticisms of Plato's doctrine of Ideas. Indeed, he was quite ready to applaud Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates retailing empty clouds that could be filled with any fancy imaginable.⁷ More seriously, the Ideas were, in their complete dissociation from the world of change and mutability, incapable of explaining and ordering the multiplicity of experience. To Aristotle they seemed merely to act as abstracted reproductions of actuality.⁸ Hegel, looking forward to Christianity, saw Plato's Ideas not as mirrors, but as inverted representations of common sense and conventional wisdom, which they are designed to indict. They are, like many utopias, reversed pictures of the world they condemn. As such the 'supersensible' and 'inner' worlds are merely the prevalent order inverted. When revenge was the justice due to one's enemies, the 'upside-down' world presented punishment as a 'cure' due to the criminal or even as a benefit to him in a world 'beyond'.⁹ It is the unjust man whose soul is injured, after all. His victim suffers no comparable affliction.¹⁰ Socrates' challenge to the amoral individualists of his day seems to be a radical transvaluation, as does his pursuit of his inner voice without concern for the legality of his conduct. In both instances he is not far from the Christian demand that enemies be forgiven rather than injured, and that good intentions alone matter even when they are expressed in criminal acts. In fact, these departures from the prevailing conventions are not as radical as they appear. For in their concentration on the person of the criminal and the effect of punishment upon him neither overcomes the individualism of justice as self-help against one's enemies. The supersensible world is just as individualistic as the actual one. Both disdain law and the general, impersonal social values which it enforces. Charity is in that respect not unlike the decadent heroic ethic of Plato's opponents. Punishment as a cure for evil-doers is perhaps an advance, in that it points to the positive value of punishing. However, the real value of punishment is not in its effect upon the law-breaker. It lies in the fact that it is an activation of the law which thus restores the balance of social rights and duties which it exists to maintain against wrongful assertions by individuals.

Hegel was, of course, perfectly aware that Plato had recognized that egocentricity was the great defect of the convention of revenge. No one can really know what is due one's friend or enemy or even who is one

or the other. Only society as a whole can make such judgments. Hegel was to use that very argument against those who looked to inner sentiment to determine what they owed their neighbour. Only the law of the state, not unintelligent feelings of benevolence, can decide what is just and what is not.¹¹ Yet Platonism ignored law as the answer to the question of what is just, because it had drawn a veil between the actual world and the supersensible realm 'beyond' or 'within'. And true justice was believed to be behind that curtain, outside the Cave. Perhaps it was necessary to draw a curtain to induce men to look behind it. For only then would they know that there was nothing there, that justice was their own creation, and that the rules of society are its only authoritative form.¹²

Platonic justice, for all its struggles against cupidity and egotism, seemed to Hegel to retain an element of anarchism which had infected modern Europe and had found its ultimate expression in the French Revolution. For it was in the pages of the *Republic* that aristocratic Europeans had found their ideal of education, of forming perfect individuals. *Bildung* is not mere schooling. It is the effort consciously to form individuals according to a premeditated plan and model. Such an enterprise is inherently a response to social incoherence. It is an effort to do the work that law and convention perform among 'free' and 'ethical' peoples. In modern Europe this education was, moreover, explicitly an attempt to return to the fountain of civilization, to Greece. And Plato was the guide. From him came the notion of service to the state at the highest aim of aristocratic training. Nothing could seem less anti-social. Hegel, however, saw it as just that, because Platonic education expressed a deep contempt for wealth.¹³ Now production, work, the creation of wealth may seem selfish, but in fact it is all eminently social. As common labour and common enjoyment this is the most genuine form of cooperative activity. Because it saw only the individual in pursuit of gain, Platonism ignored the social character of wealth. Service to the state was regarded as the very opposite of the desire for wealth, because it seemed so self-subordinating and self-sacrificing. In Hegel's view it was however, far more self-centred because it looked to self-edification. Moreover, as an ideal of self-perfection it was inherently impossible. Timocratic man yearns for wealth as Plato had, after all, himself shown in his phenomenology of moral decline.¹⁴ Hegel followed him there, no less than Aristotle's taunting 'who would be happy in such a Republic!'. But while Aristotle had accepted wealth as a necessary means to liberality and happiness, he also treated it with some disdain, as an inferior preoccupation of merely instrumental worth.¹⁵ Hegel, however, looked only to the 'social' contribution of cupidity, not to its bearing on personal character. The aristocratic contempt for the man of wealth was, from that vantage point, not merely deceptive: it was false. It was an anarchic preference for personal 'nobility' over the 'base' work of social man. In the offices of

state performed by feudal grandees the ideology of service scarcely hides the military and class interests of the 'guardians'. Self-abnegation can no longer hide the anarchic impulse here. However, feudal 'state service' and other historical examples of 'noble' values only demonstrate what was immanent in Plato's original contrast between noble service and base wealth: service to the state is really a form of self-fulfilment, while the accumulation of wealth is a contribution to social welfare. The greedy producer is less anarchic than the official educated for self-perfecting service to others.

Quite in keeping with his general design, Hegel treated the culmination of an idea as its guiding force, recognizable as such from its birth through all its historical expressions. The anarchic, indeed the suicidal impulses of Europe's ruling classes, so brilliantly displayed in the closing years of the *ancien régime*, were thus the end and the immanent principle of growth of their Platonic *Bildung* and its 'heroism of service'.¹⁶ Very similar considerations also governed Hegel's autopsy of other aspects of heroic individualism. For the failure of the guardians is only a part of this ideal, which Hegel believed had now completed its spiritual career.

The deficiencies of heroic individualism, especially of the Aristotelian autonomous man, are above all illuminated in the most spectacular set-piece of the *Phenomenology*, 'Lord and Servant'. Here Hegel traces the path, from classical birth to Christian death, step by step, of the Aristotelian hero-as-philosopher.¹⁷ For it is the autonomy of contemplative man, rather than of the warrior or ruler, that stands in contrast to the enslavement of the producer. To Hegel the ideal of a contemplative ruler who had been liberated from toil and care was an ill-conceived aspiration that was bound to fail, since there is nothing out there to contemplate. The man who expects truth to come to him from the beyond waits in vain. By cutting himself off from creativity, action and experience, moreover, he distorts his vision. For as his own most basic experience is the contrast between his own passive superiority and the working creativity of his inferiors, he comes to see everything, from man to the cosmos, in terms of this radical dualism.

Heroic man stumbles into this spiritual blind alley almost accidentally. The hero-as-warrior has quite a clear view of himself as a man. The distinctive feature that sets men apart from the beasts is the willingness to risk one's life in order to demonstrate one's prowess to oneself and to others. To choose the possibility of death for the sake of glory is a uniquely human freedom. That is the germ also of the notion of mankind.¹⁸ It does not go very far, for only the sense of a common fate, of inevitable death, is shared by heroes. One recalls that Homer's phrase for men is 'mortal beings', and that moment when Achilles and Priam recognize their common humanity as they look at the dead body of Hector. The possibility of a greater social awareness is cut off by the

immediate consequences of battle. The victorious hero enslaves the vanquished and he becomes a user of human tools. That ensures the continued isolation of the hero, and it also arrests his development. His defined role is now that of a man who depends on others to do all work and creating for him. He is thus not as free as he believes, for his life is really in the hands of his servants. Despising creativity, he has also denied himself the possibility of new learning and development. As he is transformed from a military to a philosophic figure he no longer contends with others for their esteem. Only the human tool and his owner compose his world, and the former is seen as a mere extension of the hand of the latter, like an axe. That is not a human relationship, and it cannot give rise to one. For the lord it means that by trying to be more than a man, he has become less. He is quite alone, with nothing to do and nowhere to go.

The ideal that the lord pursues justifies and reflects this situation faithfully. Mind and body, pure form and pure instrument, spirit and matter are separated. The principle of division, tools and their owners, determines all relations of superiority and inferiority. It sets a pattern now apparently evident not only in all living creatures, but one that originates in 'the constitution of the universe', according to Aristotle. Nothing can exist without a ruling principle, and men, like all parts of the universal order, are marked from the time of birth to rule or be ruled. Nor is there any way to overcome this duality. The work of the body impedes that of the mind which alone can reach happiness in a state of perfect contemplation: the height of rationality. However, even this hero of the rational life, contemplative man, remains threatened by his body, his lower part. For as the mind cannot know anything without sense experience, so the spirit cannot live without a body, which seen as pure instrumentality impedes it. The lord in his contemplative independence cannot survive without his body-slave. He is in fact not as autonomous as he thinks, for he is chained to his human tool, which is, indeed, a part of himself. That is the contradiction which undermines his whole position.

The slave as body-tool is not as immobilized by this situation as is the master. The slave learns. In his mortal fear he knows how to discipline himself. As he labours and produces for the benefit of the master, he imprints himself on the dead matter with which he works. In the process he not only creates things, but also himself. In his creative relation to objects he discovers his powers, and the really essential character of man. It is man as creator who is really self-aware and free, not the passive and dependent master. The slave achieves self-consciousness through his work. The lord, however, can come to it only in 'recognizing' the slave and himself in the other. That the slave was an extension of himself had always been accepted. Now he comes to see in this mere appendage his own humanity. He is thus converted to the slave's point of view. That

attitude is no longer one of pure submissiveness. The slave now has a mind of his own. However, as he remains a slave, his independence is merely a stubbornness, the resentment that is always typical of the slave-mentality. Nevertheless, the heroic aspiration to autonomy is not lost. It is rather internalized by this, the Stoic, state of consciousness.

Although the lord has been drawn into the slave's realm of consciousness, the slave is not raised to mastery. Marcus Aurelius on his throne and Epictetus in his chains share a single philosophy. Both cherish the autonomy of their mind and will, and feel burdened and hemmed in by their body and the weight of the external world. The heroic quest has been turned entirely inward. It is less a liberation than an escape from reality – a path made altogether inviting by the oppressiveness of Roman rule.¹⁹ The sense of a crushing external world is overpowering. It is felt in Marcus Aurelius' quoting Epictetus' saying that man was 'a poor soul burdened with a corpse' and pitying the great warrior heroes of the past for suffering from 'an infinity of enslavements'.²⁰ Epictetus' own view of slavery is an inversion of actuality, not a liberation, when he remarks that slavery is not a matter of being owned by another, but of being ambitious and avaricious.²¹ To be sure, the Stoic wise man has not only found his freedom, but also humanity within himself. However, he is so removed from historical life that he can only issue abstract, dogmatic rules of conduct which, directed at all men in all cases, fit no one at any time. In this he only mirrors the legal order in which he lives, which assigns only legal personality and abstract roles to the inhabitants of the Empire.

The heroic, resentful withdrawal of the Stoic wise man devalues the actual world and concrete experience too radically. His balance is destroyed in a scepticism which comes to distrust the evidence of the senses completely and rejects the outer world as an impenetrable maze where anything may or may not be true. Because the sceptic must continue to live by his senses and to accept social, no less than natural laws, which he regards as entirely arbitrary, his inner integrity is broken. He is aware of himself as free and unfree, as certain and uncertain, and this distraction is unendurable. He turns from this world, inner and outer, and yearns for a beyond.²² The 'unhappy consciousness' abandons the heroic pursuit of autonomy in what is now wholly a vale of tears. Its final term is reached when men, submitting to the mediating agency of the Church, give up all their powers and reduce themselves, in their own mind, to mere things.²³

The heroic individualism of antiquity did have its moments of glory, but it could be followed from birth to death without regret. Hegel gives one an inimitable sense of the sadness of its decline and defeat. However, he preserves his detachment in the face of these failures, for they were the inevitable consequences of self-destructive illusions. Individualism,

even in its heroic, ancient form, is a fundamental misunderstanding of reality which prevents men from recognizing their essential identity, their social being, and their common humanity. The civic ethos of Athens, however, was the very opposite of individualism, and its memory could only inspire longing. The world of Antigone, the memory of the spirit of a 'free people', was a reminder of the perfection men could reach. To those who think of him as the complacent philosopher of progress, it should come as a surprise that Hegel felt that the real 'paradise of the human spirit' had existed in the remote past, in early Athens.²⁴

The happiness of the Athenians was all due to their being a free people. No tension between the private and the public self, the inner and the external world or the here and the beyond interrupted the undivided consciousness of free citizens in a free polity. They alone had laws and customs that were the creation of each and all of them. And all and every one of them expressed in his person the collective consciousness of the whole polity.²⁵ This integrity of spirit had only one defect. It was spontaneously lived and enjoyed without being understood. The reflective demands of the restless intellect had, therefore, to break away from this happy condition.²⁶ That alone must serve both as an explanation and as a consolation for the loss of the most perfect moment in history. It allowed Hegel some hope that newly self-aware men might yet reconstruct what they had once destroyed, but it was only many years later that he was able to provide convincing arguments to sustain such an expectation. In the *Phenomenology* he exposed the destructive character of the individualism that had undone the ancient polis and that has dominated the modern age all too effectively. There was nothing in the spirit of his own age that he could then recognize as a successor to the 'ethical substance' of the classical past. That substance was only 'a floating selfless adjective' for us.²⁷ Indeed, not even those aspects of the modern spirit that Hegel could admire showed the seeds of a collective consciousness akin to that of a free people. Hegel could think of the vision of ancient Athens as a possible, but certainly not as a likely future.²⁸ And except for an occasional lapse such as this Hegel did not allow himself to think ahead, preferring the certainty of mnemonic knowledge and the consolations of elegiac praise.

What had the happiness of Athens been? What did its freedom signify? First of all it means that the people preserves its collective autonomy and individuality against other peoples. To that end war is not only an aspect of political life, but is the supreme expression of citizenship. Indeed, war has an educative function also. It tears the citizens away from the many private associations and groups to which they belong.²⁹ The free people was for Hegel, as for Aristotle, not a pile of bricks, but composed of a plurality of types and groups.³⁰ The government, however, has the highest

and prior claim upon them. For its power is 'the will, the self' of the people.³¹ The laws express the active character of each individual citizen. They are not impersonal rules 'out there' that impose roles on legal persons, as in Rome. The law is such that each citizen can see himself as a particularization of its general aims. For he has willed them. That is why a free people is 'reason realized'.³²

Law and government are not the only aspects of civic life that are rational in that the most general public activities are freely accepted by the citizens who recognize them as their own creations. Religion is also free, because the polity is its substance. Religion, which Hegel understood to be the collective beliefs of a community, is social and this-worldly among a free people. Its supreme expression is art.³³ And it is an open public art that is not an outpouring of the artist's personal inspiration, but an expression of the spirit of a whole people.³⁴ The rites of such a people are a daily part of its common existence. Unlike the Olympian religion over which Zeus presides, it is truly popular and local. That official pantheon is too feeble and distant, and in its unstable division of labour between gods and men it is even ridiculous.³⁵ The real religion of a free people remains particular, a part of its active, shared life. The people has a god to unite it, but he represents not a remote hope or a deferred fulfilment, but present, common work.³⁶ The drama, which is a spiritualized and universalized rite, abandons all the crudities and improbabilities of local and Olympian ritual, but it is still rooted in common experience and is shared by all.³⁷

The only powers that are not encompassed by the polity itself are those ascribed to fate. Men are creative, but they are not omnipotent. Fate is the whole of that dire necessity to which men must submit. They bow before all that defeats and defies them. The common people, *demos*, especially aware of its helplessness, finds its voice in the chorus which, as it warns and laments, reminds men of their limits, of fate. However, fate is not a deity or an object of reverence. Eventually it is even understood to be character, and the circumstances created by men in their complexity.³⁸ What mattered most to Hegel was the integrity and autonomy of the religion of a free people. It was a uniting, not a devisive, a common, not a private, a human, not a supernatural religiosity. In short it was everything that Christianity is not.

The free people owes its conditions not to invention, but to a unique social balance. The equipoise between the kin and the city is really what maintains it. The ethical spirit which sustains freedom has its roots in a precarious arrangement by which the polity preserves the kin and the kin raises citizens fit for freedom.³⁹ Hegel went well beyond Aristotle here, who had only seen the family as a necessary economic base of the polis. Hegel ascribed to it a far greater and very much less material function in the life of a free people. The family (or kin) group is an ethical, not

just a productive unit. While the polity remains prior to the family as the only realm in which men can reach their highest ends, it can not without the ethical family create the spirit of citizenship on which its survival depends. The ethical family ties the living to the dead. Its religion is ancestor worship. As such it is less than rational, with its deep belief in the nether-world. However, it serves a truly human and social function. It protects the individual against his most awful fear, the horror of extinction. Here the dead endure among the living, who continue to fulfil their obligations to their departed kinsmen. Hence the absolute duty to bury and avenge their slain kinsman. For women this family, with its rites and duties, is the whole of the social world. The men, however, must ascend to the realm of light, the upper world of the polity, as young citizens and warriors. The women in their educative and supporting task, as the guardians of the family ethos, also make their contribution to the civic order. Indirectly but indispensably they give men the strength to become citizens.⁴⁰

The criminal law of the city has its roots in the family. That is also the source of its strength and its social immediacy. When the civic ethos at last calms the furies, the prosecution of murderers is left to the kin of the slain citizen. The community as such does not participate on behalf of either party in cases that call for vengeance. It only sets limits to the process of retaliatory justice, but it does not deprive the kinsmen of their duties to their dead.⁴¹ That is why they can devote themselves so wholeheartedly to the upper realm, to the rational, distributive, man-created law of the city. It supports their familial existence, which in turn prepares them for the civic life. Again war, the necessary discipline and highest function of citizens, would be an intolerable slaughter if the warrior did not know that he would be buried and worshipped by the surviving kin, among whom he would thus remain alive.

Sooner or later the balance gives way. Sophocles' *Antigone* in Hegel's view was the dramatic recollection of that collapse. Antigone stands unwavering for the ethos of the kin. The brother must be buried, and to do this is her unquestionable duty. To punish the usurper, the disturber of the public order is just as surely the task of Creon. He must assert the rules of the realm of light, indeed of reason, the human law made by human beings for their own fulfilment. If public law runs counter to the demands of the nether world, to the ethos of family life, that is a disaster, but not one that he can avoid by giving way. The upshot is that both the family and the polity are destroyed. Fate in the form of destruction overcomes both.⁴²

Now the individual ceases to see himself as wholly a social being, and neither family nor city can absorb him entirely. The struggle between two social claims degenerates into the war between the sexes; a concomitant of democratic societies that Hegel was exceptionally sensitive to have

recognized. In Aristophanes' comedies he found how war had ceased to be the occasion on which citizens proved their freedom and had become, in the eyes of the women, a silly escapade provoked by male incompetence and stubbornness. The actors no longer wear masks to hide their individuality and to emphasize their social, impersonal roles. Now the stage is full of specific people, each one speaking for himself or herself. The sister who preserves the ethos of the family is replaced by the wife and mother who only wants her sons and lovers to stay alive and at home. As Praxagora explains carefully, women have no use for war. Now that they speak as individuals and no longer as the guardians of the familial ethos, their hostility to the male world of so-called law and order and war becomes open and their weapons, ridicule and laughter, prove irresistible. They mark the dissolution of a free people, but it is an outburst of such healthy individual self-assertion that even Hegel could not solemnly condemn it.⁴³

To most contemporary audiences it would seem evident that the ladies of *Lysistrata* and the *Ecclesiazusae* enjoy far more freedom than Antigone, burdened with endless ethical obligations even before her conflict with Creon. That was, however, not Hegel's view, and not because he felt sorry for Aristophanes' beleaguered males. He simply had a very different notion of freedom. What, in fact, did he mean when he spoke of a 'free people'? He certainly did not mean that its citizens had rights against the polity. Quite on the contrary, their freedom was due wholly to their being unaware of themselves as individuals apart from their social being. It is freedom conceived in spiritual and not institutional terms, moreover. Just as slavery and lordship are not discussed as economic and legal institutions, but as inter-acting psychological and philosophic phenomena, so the freedom of early Athens is not a matter of its political or religious organization. Even the ethical family, which Hegel analyses in such detail, is seen as a set of spiritual relationships among its members, dead and alive. The freedom of the people is a state of mind, both individual and collective, that is marked by an absence of tension between the demands of the polity and personal beliefs and aspirations. The very possibility of such a conflict is unknown to the free citizen, or at least obscured by the harmonious transition from family to public life. For as soon as the ethos of the family and the duties of citizenship collide, the individual is emancipated from both, and now sees himself as a discrete entity for whom society is 'out there'.

It seems that the 'free people' is more easily recognized for what it was *not* than for what it actually was. That is entirely in keeping with Hegel's purpose, which was to contrast the happiness of the socially integrated citizen, for every one of whom this was a spontaneous rather than consciously chosen role, with the unhappiness of the restless, searching individualist of the modern age. Little as Hegel liked the Middle

Ages, he could scarcely have forgotten that feudalism had also been a system of kinship ties and of ancestor worship. The individualism that had followed its dissolution was the spiritual descendant of Socratic independence, and Hegel viewed both with equal misgivings. That made Athens so unforgettable. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel did not concern himself with the shape of the modern state, but when he eventually did try to establish its principles of cohesion and rationality, the vision of the ancient polis was still with him. To be sure, he knew that the religious and political role of the kin was extinguished, and he fully accepted this state of affairs. That made the search for the ethical and functional equivalent of the Sophoclean family a compelling enterprise for him, and one that was to mark his political philosophy deeply.⁴⁴

The impact of the reproaching image of antiquity was heavy indeed. For Hegel used Antigone's example to expose the vanity of modern, and especially Kantian, morality. He was very far from admiring Antigone simply as a prophetess of the higher law. Indeed, when he quotes her celebrated lines about its obscure origins he makes it clear that she did not understand the law that bound her, and just believed in its divinity.⁴⁵ She did not see the limits of kinship obligations and religiosity. Hegel was impressed with her ethical certainty even though he rejected her claim along with every other higher law doctrine. Justice and law can only be created by public authorities.⁴⁶ Creon's law, made by a government for a polity, was the most rational and most universal law possible. All other rules are less general and less valid because they serve lesser groups. Hegel did not think all actual laws perfect. Far from it. The effect of Roman law was clearly profoundly destructive to those who had to abide by it.⁴⁷ That did not, however, render notions of an extra-political or supra-human legality or justice acceptable to him. Law and justice, like every other idea, were entirely the work of men acting together.

The way men judge the rules that they have created for themselves, however, differs. It was Antigone's great merit that although she did not understand the origins of the law which she so heroically defended, she never thought of herself as an individual expressing a personal morality. She spoke solely as a sister within an ethical family, as a social being, fulfilling a defined role. That was the real source of her perfect certainty. She did not look into her heart or conscience to discover righteousness. She knew what had to be done, and always had known, because she was not making a moral choice, but obeying an unquestionable law.⁴⁸ That she failed to understand that law, that her allegiance to the nether world, to the ethos of the kin, was less valid than the law of the polity that expressed the rationality of the world of light, was irrelevant here. What mattered, above all, was that she had no notion of conscience, of personal conviction, or of individuality as an inherent claim. She was right, within her limits, because she represented an ethical group and its binding

values. The universal significance of Sophocles' play and its enduring power to educate and move us are due to its social character. The drama is true because it presents two inherently valid social moralities and two conflicting sets of social mores. To Hegel the tension between personal conscience and reason of state was trivial by comparison, a mere accident. The confrontation of two dependent yet irreconcilable social claims, which go beyond a mere judgment of individual rightness or error, is a philosophical tragedy. It is tragic not because the protagonists suffer, but because they are not mere private individuals, but are each a personification of a social necessity. Creon is not a mere tyrant, but the voice of the polity and its priority, its claim to general social rationality, the end of men's striving. Antigone is neither a criminal nor a martyr to conscience. She also asserts a social, ethical claim, the validity of which had not been challenged until it collided with the demands of the public order. That is why her certainty is rooted not in personal conviction but in historical reality. It would be unfair to Hegel to say that he was defending the supremacy of the modern state in the person of Creon. He would not have admired Antigone so profoundly if that had been his aim. He was, rather, insisting on the excellence of men and women who knew themselves to be wholly members of established social orders and who lived and died ethically, that is in response to the customs and beliefs of their peers.

The greatest difference between such free peoples and all others is in the quality of justice that renders ethical life so valid and certain. Athenian distributive justice was not an alien imposition like the law of Rome and of the modern world. It was not the haphazard outcome of the judicial resolution of individual conflicts. It had intelligible guiding principles which corresponded to the actual 'self-conscious will of all' and thus integrated the various groups and citizens within the polity into a single whole.⁴⁹ There is no room left for the rampant self-assertion of the modern world. People find their pleasure in the family, not in the defiance of social convention. When they rise above the pursuit of pleasure, they turn to active citizenship, not to introspection. The law of their hearts is not a self-centred tyranny, but a sense of the uniformity of all hearts in an ethical society. Virtue is a civic act, not personal edification pitted against the course of the world. When men concern themselves with a cause it is a matter of concrete policy, not chimerical dreaming. They weigh actions within a stable context of law and justice, instead of forever questioning and testing the validity of the laws in terms of some purely personal or abstract rule. Instead of the ever-unsteady voice of conscience they have objective ethical laws to guide them. Not for them the 'pompous' rhetoric about the good of all mankind and the oppression of humanity; they pursued the public good of their city, a task within their reach.⁵⁰ The conflicts that ethical people experience, like those between

Antigone and Creon, are not the 'comical' conflicts between two abstract duties. They are collisions between two social groups and their respective ethical orders.⁵¹ Antigone's claim may be inferior to Creon's, but it is the expression of a complete 'character' and of an objective social situation. That is far superior to the modern (Kantian) morality, which is merely a matter of abstract knowledge. She may have been less self-aware, but she completely lived her morality; she did not have to think.⁵² Modern morality with its empty and universal 'ought' forces the individual to give his duty any aim his conscience may choose. As such it hovers between tautology and arbitrariness. Antigone knows right and wrong with perfect certainty – that is her greatness and that of her society. Modern morality knows nothing of such poise. It dooms the individual to testing every law, every choice, by matching it against formal maxims that lack all specific content. This syllogistic practice reduces duty to a self-evident generality and moral action to an exercise in formal logic. In practice it can yield no guidance. The individual is left to his own confusion, apart from, and indeed opposed to, the sole source of genuine morality: social ethics.⁵³ It is a devastating indictment. Moreover, since Hegel was at this stage of his intellectual career neither able nor willing to show just where the present age of transition was to find its social certainties, his outburst suffers from all those faults which he was denouncing. He also was pitting himself against his own time and place, even if it was only to overcome the manifest defects of critical reason. He also, after all, was a fine example of the spiritual maladjustment of the age.

Hegel's defence of Creon and even his view of Antigone's character have rather slender ties to Sophocles' drama. The practice of using the ancients to reveal the flaws of the moderns has, however, often demanded such ingenuity. One need not go back as far as Rousseau to recall how Sparta could serve to condemn modern Europe. The German Romantics, among whom Hegel had lived for years, were all deeply devoted to the memory of ancient Greece, the home of genius. The contrast between beautiful antiquity and the world that followed, their own age especially, was for them a subject of anguished reflection. Schiller had thus lamented the passing of the spirit of playfulness that had moved the Greeks to be so infinitely beautiful. He, and at much the same time Schlegel, had drawn detailed comparisons between classical and modern art, spontaneous and artificial education (*Bildung*), a capacity for realization against one for perpetual striving, and lastly a cyclical and progressive view of history. In each case the difference tended to favour the ancients.⁵⁴

There are some traces of Romantic nostalgia for Greece in the *Phenomenology*. Right at the outset Hegel spoke of the superiority of Greek schooling, which perfected the natural mind by raising it to general

conceptions, to that of the moderns who find abstractions ready-made and have neglected concrete experience.⁵⁵ Again, Hegel was not blind to Greece as the home of beauty. If it were not for Greece we would not know what beauty is, he was to remark a few years later.⁵⁶ This for him was also the moment when the human spirit had been endowed with 'freedom, depth and serenity'. Nevertheless, there are great differences between Hegel's and the aesthetic's dream of Greece, which reflect his general contempt for Romanticism. Schiller's notion of beauty as a mediator between matter and form or nature and reason and as the cure for public ills was far too irrational for Hegel. Beauty, he wrote bitterly, 'is powerless and helpless and hates the understanding'. It is too feeble to endure the destructive impact of restless inquiry which the pursuit of knowledge demands. Greek spontaneity, serenity and 'cheerfulness of heart' for all their beauty were intellectual defects, and in its drive towards truth the human spirit had to relinquish this happiness. Moreover, it was not the Greeks at play, but the disciplined freedom of their civic life that Hegel admired. The Romantic distaste for the useful and the practical, no less than the yearning for the imaginative and so the individual and particular, was part of all that Hegel regarded as most destructive in the modern 'unhappy consciousness'.⁵⁷ It was the active, down-to-earth, collective spirit of Greece that he chose to pit against this, as against all forms of individualism. The spiritual health of the Greeks was in their ability to create collectively a religion, a polity and an art here and now. Nor was their happiness a matter of personal gratification. It was also a social state, as was their freedom. War was its highest manifestation, and not because it was enjoyable. It was the absence of Romantic individuality among people who knew collective self-mastery, limited only by necessity, that appealed most to Hegel. It was no doubt for the benefit of the Romantic poets that he chose to stress the religious, public character of Greek art, so remote from the modern cult of genius.

Above all, Hegel was still alone in sensing clearly the dark side of the Greek spirit. That especially made any notion of regeneration through play seem a travesty upon that true message of antiquity which he found in Sophoclean tragedy. Indeed, Sophocles, as he knew, was also looking back to an earlier age to record its meaning for a city already in ethical decline. That in itself drew Hegel to him. And indeed the *Phenomenology* as a whole is a drama of sorts, and its author more than half in love with fate. The spectacle of spiritual creations struggling with each other, all in the grip of the necessity of pushing on and on towards certain knowledge, is not unlike a tragedy. And looking back at this process we also relive a shared experience. Like the Athenian public Hegel had relived his and our spiritual past and found understanding in reintegrating into his own consciousness and that of his readers the cumulative creations of

European literary culture. He had followed it from freedom to enslavement and illusion and finally to what he believed to be the grave of certainty and achievement. He might well have ended on a note of triumph, but he did not. He looked back in reverence and resignation, like an exhausted chorus, which was a measure of his devotion to ancient Greece.

Notes

- 1 *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, 2nd edn (London, 1949), pp. 83–4, 95; *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), pp. 22, 31.
- 2 *Phenomenology*, pp. 75–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 15–16.
- 3 *Phenomenology*, pp. 279, 747; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 258–9, 519.
- 4 *Phenomenology*, pp. 244–5, 501–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 153, 342–6.
- 5 'On Classical Studies', in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (and Richard Kroner) (Chicago, 1948), pp. 329–30.
- 6 *Phenomenology*, pp. 97–9, 105–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 33–5, 39.
- 7 *Phenomenology*, pp. 747–8; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 519–20.
- 8 *Phenomenology*, pp. 201–3; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 119–21. Aristotle, *Ethics*, i, 1096a and b; *Metaphysics*, A, 990b–993a; M, 1078b–1080a.
- 9 *Phenomenology*, pp. 204–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 122–4. The true function of law that Hegel points to is, again, very close to Aristotle's view, *Ethics*, v, 1131b–1134a.
- 10 *Gorgias*, 469, 472, 476–80, 508–9, 525, 527. Also *Crito* and *Phaedo*, *passim*; *Laws*, 860–2.
- 11 *Phenomenology*, pp. 443–4; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 304–5. That was, after all, the message of the first two books of the *Republic* as well.
- 12 *Phenomenology*, pp. 212–13; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 128–9.
- 13 *Phenomenology*, pp. 519–29; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 354–63.
- 14 *Republic*, viii, 547–64.
- 15 *Politics*, ii, 1264a–1264b; i, 1256a–1256b; ii, 1263a–1263b; *Ethics*, iv, 1120a; vi, 1141a and b, 1144a and b; x, 1178a.
- 16 *Phenomenology*, p. 527; *Phänomenologie*, p. 360.
- 17 *Phenomenology*, pp. 229–40; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 141–50. The degree to which the relationship of master and slave, the man who can attain to rationality and the man doomed to pure instrumentality, dominated Aristotle's entire philosophy can hardly be exaggerated. It became the paradigm of all order, whether it be that of the cosmos or that of an individual person. Above all, the contemplative hero is always explicitly regarded as the man freed from the cares of the body and every sort of physical toil, that is the very essence of his self-sufficiency, which puts him at the apex of mankind just as surely as labour puts the slave at the very bottom. *Ethics*, v, 1138b, viii, 1161a–1161b, x, 1177a–1178a; *Politics*, i, 1252a–1255b, 1260a–1260b, iii, 1277b. H. C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 88–101.
- 18 Baldry, *Unity of Mankind*, pp. 8–15.
- 19 *Phenomenology*, pp. 242–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 151–4.
- 20 *Mediations*, trans. Maxwell Staniforth (London, 1964), book iv, s. 41; book viii, s. 3.

21 'Of Freedom', *Moral Discourses*, ed. H. D. Rouse (London, 1910), pp. 200–16.

22 *Phenomenology*, pp. 246–51; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 154–8.

23 *Phenomenology*, pp. 265–6, 755; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 170, 525.

24 'On Classical Studies', p. 325.

25 Although Baillie translates *Volk* as nation, Hegel obviously meant 'people', for he used the term 'nation' exactly once to refer to the Homeric Pantheon and the linguistic unity that bound Greeks together: *Phenomenology*, p. 731; *Phänomenologie*, p. 506. The term *Volk* is used to apply to the polis and its free citizens: *Phenomenology*, pp. 374–82, 709–10; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 255–61, 490–1.

26 *Phenomenology*, pp. 378–9, 498–9, 747; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 258–9, 342, 519.

27 *Phenomenology*, p. 380; *Phänomenologie*, p. 260.

28 *Phenomenology*, pp. 379, 460–1; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 259, 315–16.

29 *Phenomenology*, pp. 473–4, 497–8; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 324, 341.

30 *Phenomenology*, pp. 709–10; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 490–1.

31 *Phenomenology*, p. 511; *Phänomenologie*, p. 348.

32 *Phenomenology*, pp. 378, 731; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 258, 506–7.

33 *Phenomenology*, pp. 709–11; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 490–2.

34 *Phenomenology*, pp. 715–16; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 494–5.

35 *Phenomenology*, pp. 733–5; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 508–10.

36 *Phenomenology*, pp. 723–4; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 501–2.

37 *Phenomenology*, pp. 736–45; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 510–17.

38 *Phenomenology*, pp. 685–6, 735–48; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 473–4, 510–20.

39 *Phenomenology*, pp. 467–8, 481–2; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 319–20, 330.

40 *Phenomenology*, pp. 468–79, 739; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 320–8, 512–13.

41 *Phenomenology*, pp. 480–1; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 329–40.

42 *Phenomenology*, pp. 484–96; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 330–40.

43 *Phenomenology*, pp. 496–8, 745–9; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 340–2, 517–20.

44 Hegel believes that there is a 'universal' civil-service class arising to rationality from the middle class wholly through some undefined sort of education: and that there is a politically impartial landed aristocracy particularly suited for legislative activity because its entailed estates guarantee its ethos (*Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1942), §§ 158–81, 287–307). If there is something a little contrived about such notions, it may well be that they answered the reproving demands of Hegel's classical memories.

45 *Phenomenology*, pp. 452–3; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 311–12.

46 *Phenomenology*, pp. 467, 473–4, 493–5; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 319, 323–4, 337–40.

47 *Phenomenology*, pp. 501–6; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 342–6.

48 *Phenomenology*, pp. 452, 458, 484–6, 613–14; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 311, 314, 330–2, 423–4.

49 *Phenomenology*, pp. 479–80; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 328–9.

50 *Phenomenology*, pp. 409–10; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 280–1.

51 *Phenomenology*, pp. 446–53; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 306–12.

52 *Phenomenology*, pp. 613–14; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 423–4.

53 *Phenomenology*, pp. 446–53; *Phänomenologie*, pp. 306–12.

54 A. O. Lovejoy, 'Schiller and the Genesis of German Romanticism', in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York, 1960), p. 215.

55 *Phenomenology*, p. 94; *Phänomenologie*, p. 30.

56 'On Classical Studies', p. 325.

57 *Phenomenology*, p. 93; *Phänomenologie*, p. 29. Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*, trans. Reginald Snell (London 1954), especially letters II, VI and XXVI, pp. 26–7, 42 and 138.

Logic, Dialectic, Metaphysics

The idea of Hegel's *Logic*

Hans-Georg Gadamer

Surprisingly, in our century Hegel's philosophy has returned to favour after decades of playing the role of whipping boy and representing the quintessence of that 'speculative' philosophy held in contempt by those orientated towards the empirical sciences. Even today such an opinion of his thought prevails in the Anglo-Saxon world. Interest in Hegel first gradually revived during the era of neo-Kantianism. At the turn of the century, there were impressive advocates of speculative idealism in Italy and Holland, England and France; to mention only a few, Croce, Bolland and Bradley. At the same time the Hegelianism latently at work in neo-Kantianism emerged in the philosophic consciousness of the time in Germany, above all in William Windelband's Heidelberg circle (to which men like Julius Ebbinghaus, Richard Kroner, Paul Hensel, George Lukács, Ernst Bloch, and others belonged) and also in the continuing development of the Marburg school (Nicolai Hartmann, Ernst Cassirer). Still Hegel's philosophy had no real presence here, since it sufficed for this so-called neo-Hegelianism merely to reiterate Hegel's criticism of Kant.

But that was changed in Germany by the impulse coming from Martin Heidegger and, after that, by the interest of French social scientists in Hegel which was awakened above all by the lectures of Alexander Kojève. Both of these initiatives aroused a rather one-sided philosophic interest in Hegel's first great work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The *Logic*, in contrast, remained till today very much in the background. As a matter of fact, however, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not the main systematic work of the Hegelian philosophy which prevailed through decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a kind of anticipation of what was to come in which Hegel tried to summarize the whole of his philosophy from a certain point of view. As opposed to Kant, the author of the three 'critiques', who found himself

arguing about their function with those who followed him, there was no doubt for Hegel that this phenomenological introduction to his system was in no sense the system of philosophic sciences itself. In contrast, the *Science of Logic* is not merely a first step in the direction of constructing the system of philosophic sciences, as the so-called *Encyclopaedia* was later to present it; rather it is the first part of that system and its foundation. Moreover, the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophic Sciences* is itself actually only a textbook for Hegel's lectures, these being the source of his great influence on the nineteenth century – for this influence stemmed not so much from the sibylline depth of his books as from his extraordinary ability to make his listeners perceive his meaning. Basically, Hegel's only books are the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic*, the sole part of his system which he actually completed. Even Hegel's most famous published book, to which the nineteenth century turned above all his others, his *Philosophy of Right*, is in truth nothing but a textbook for academic instruction and not the actual elaboration of a part of the system. All these facts indicate that it is time to place the *Science of Logic* closer to the centre of Hegel research than it has been heretofore, and my hope is that an understanding of Hegel's idea of the science of logic might show the way for coming to grips with it which our present philosophic interests demand.

To begin with, I shall treat the idea of Hegel's *Logic* generally. I shall proceed then to the method of this *Logic*. Third, I will examine somewhat more precisely the starting point of the *Logic*, one of the most discussed problems of Hegel's philosophy. In conclusion I shall discuss the relevance of Hegel's *Logic*, above all in reference to its bearing on the problem of language, which plays such a central role in the philosophy of today.

With his *Logic* Hegel seeks to bring the transcendental philosophy initiated by Kant to its conclusion. According to Hegel, Fichte was the first to grasp the universal systematic implications of Kant's way of viewing things from the perspective of transcendental philosophy. At the same time, however, Hegel was of the opinion that Fichte's own 'Doctrine of Science' did not really finish the task of developing the entirety of human knowledge out of self-consciousness. To be sure, Fichte's contention is that his 'Doctrine of Science' had done precisely that. He saw, in the spontaneity of self-consciousness, the actual, underlying operation, 'the active deed' (*Tathandlung*), as he calls it. This autonomous deed of self-consciousness, i.e. its determining itself in relation to itself, which Kant had formulated in the concept of autonomy as the essence of practical reason, was now to be the point of origin for every truth of human knowledge. The 'I' is this 'immediate self-consciousness' (*L I 61*) (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, Meiner, Leipzig, 1951). Hegel's objection is that here the ideal of a pure 'I' as self-consciousness is insisted upon from the start,

without the process of mediation which should lead up to it. Such a subjective supposition as this, he argues, does not in the least guarantee a sure understanding of what the self, i.e. the 'I' in the transcendental sense, might be.

Now one must resist simply accepting Hegel's version of this state of affairs, according to which Fichte taught a merely subjective idealism, Hegel himself being the first to join this subjective idealism with the objective idealism of Schelling's philosophy of nature in the grand, authentic synthesis of absolute idealism. In point of fact, Fichte's 'Doctrine of Science' depends very much upon the idea of absolute idealism, i.e. on the development of the entire content of knowledge as the complete whole of self-consciousness. Nevertheless one must concede to Hegel that Fichte, instead of really completing the introduction into the standpoint of the 'Doctrine of Science' – that is the elevation and purification of the empirical 'I' to the transcendental 'I' – actually only insisted upon it. Precisely this elevation is what Hegel now claims to have accomplished through his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. One can also express the matter as follows: Hegel demonstrates that the pure 'I' is spirit. That is the result which spirit reaches at the end of its course of appearances. It leaves behind its appearance as consciousness and as self-consciousness (including the 'recognized' self-consciousness of the 'we') as well as all forms of reason and spirit which still contain the opposition of consciousness and its object. The truth of the 'I' is pure knowing. Thus, at the end of the *Phenomenology's* final chapter on 'absolute knowing' stands the idea of a philosophical science whose *moments* are no longer determinate forms of consciousness, but rather determinate concepts. In its initial form such a science must be the science of logic. The beginning of science is therefore based upon the result of consciousness's experience, which commences with 'Sense Certainty' and is completed in the forms of spirit which Hegel calls 'absolute knowing': 'art', 'religion' and 'philosophy'. They are absolute because they are no longer opinions of consciousness which extend to an object beyond that which presents and fully affirms itself within these forms. Science first begins here, because here for the first time nothing but thoughts, that is nothing but the pure concept, is thought in its determinacy (*Ph* 562). Absolute knowing is thus the result of a purification in the sense that the truth of Fichte's concept of the transcendental 'I' emerges, not merely as being a subject, but rather as reason and spirit and, accordingly, as all of reality. Thus Hegel lays his very own foundation, on which he rebuilds absolute knowing as the truth of metaphysics as Aristotle, for one, conceived of it in *nous* or Aquinas, for another, in *intellectus agens*. And thus a universal logic – which explicates the ideas of God before the creation – is made possible. Hegel's concept of spirit which transcends the subjective forms of self-consciousness thus goes back to the *logos-nous* metaphysics of the Pla-

tonic and Aristotelian tradition, which pre-dates the whole question of self-consciousness. In this fashion, Hegel achieves his objective of reinstating the Greek *logos* on the new foundation of modern, self-knowing spirit. The light in which all truth is seen is cast from consciousness' becoming clear about itself. No other, no further ontological or theological justification is given.

If one wishes to characterize the idea of Hegel's logic from this viewpoint, a comparison with Plato's dialectic is useful, for that is the model which Hegel always has in mind. In Greek philosophy Hegel saw the philosophy of *logos*, or put another way, the courage to consider pure thoughts *per se*. As a result, Greek thought succeeded in unfolding the universe of Ideas. For this realm Hegel coins a new expression, typical of him, but which I have yet to find in anyone before him, namely, 'the logical'. What he is characterizing here is the entire cosmos of Ideas as Plato's philosophy dialectically develops it. Now Plato was driven by the desire to provide justification for every thought, and his doctrine of Ideas was intended to satisfy the demand which Socrates makes in the dialogues that for every contention a reason or argument must always be given (*logon didonai*). For his part, Hegel will claim that his dialectic in the *Logic* meets the requirement of accounting for the rightness of each individual thought by explicating them all within a system. Of course, such an 'account' as that could not be given in live, Socratic dialogue, where each successive stage of presumed knowledge is abandoned as the participants proceed through a sequence of questions and answers and then finally come to an understanding.¹ Nor could it be given by grounding this procedure, as Plato did, in the doctrine of Ideas. Rather, the basis has to be the methodologically rigorous one of a 'science' which ultimately is founded upon Descartes's idea of method and which, within the framework of transcendental philosophy, is developed from the principle of self-consciousness. The systematic derivation of pure concepts in the *Science of Logic*, in which spirit has attained 'the pure element of its existence, i.e. the concept', subsequently determines the system of science as a whole. That derivation presents the universe of possible thought as the necessity governing the continuing self-determination of the concept. The objective of this exposition is such that Plato's unending discussion of the soul with itself could only serve as a formal model.

A glance back at Greek philosophy is necessary, too, if one is to understand Hegel's conception of the method through which he sought to convert traditional logic into a genuine philosophical science – the method of dialectic. Dialectic develops from the magnificent boldness of the Eleatics, who, in opposition to what appears to be the case in sense experience, held strictly and relentlessly to what thought and thought alone demands. It is a well-known observation of Hegel's that these

Greek thinkers were the first to leave firm ground and to risk the high seas of thinking solely with the aid of thought itself. They were the first to demand and to carry out that pure thinking to which the title of as recent a work as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* still implicitly refers. The expression 'pure thinking' obviously points to a Pythagorean-Platonic source. Implied is the purification or catharsis in which thought is freed from the cloudiness of sense perception.

Plato portrayed this art of pure thinking in his dramatization of Socrates' discussions in which the logical consequences of each thought are pursued unerringly. But Hegel comments with a measure of justification that Plato's dialectic is deficient in that it is only negative and does not reach any scientific insight. As a matter of fact, Plato's dialectic is, properly speaking, not a method at all, and least of all the transcendental method of Fichte or Hegel. It has no absolute beginning. Nor is it founded on an ideal or absolute knowledge which could be said to be free from all opposition between knowing and what is known and be held to embrace all knowledge in such a way that the entire content of knowledge would be exhausted in the continuing determination of the concept in relationship to itself. For Hegel something else was paradigmatic in Plato, namely, the concatenation of Ideas. Plato's underlying conviction, which we find developed above all in the *Parmenides*, is that there is no truth of a single Idea and, accordingly, that isolating an Idea always means missing the truth. Ideas exist only linked, mixed, or interwoven as they are encountered in discussion, or are 'there' each time in the discourse of the soul with itself. Human thought is not constituted like an originative, infinite, onlooking mind. Rather, it can only grasp what is, in discursive development of its thoughts. Kant, for one, also brought this point into sharp relief by limiting legitimate concepts to those which refer to experience. But be that as it may, the truth visible behind Plato's *Parmenides* was that the *logos* is always a complex of Ideas, i.e. the relationship of Ideas to each other. And to this extent the first truth of Hegel's *Logic* is a Platonic one which is to be perceived even in the *Meno*, when it is said that all of nature is interrelated and that therefore the path of recollection of one thing is the path of recollection of all things. There are no single Ideas, and it is the purpose of dialectic to dispel the untruth of their separateness.

That is most easily seen in regard to the determinations of 'reflection'.² Everyone knows that identity would have no meaning by itself if self-sameness and differentness were not implied in it. Identity without difference would be absolutely nothing. Thus the determinations of reflection provide a most convincing argument for the internal linkage of Ideas with each other. As a matter of fact, these determinations are the basis of the argument in the *Sophist*, since they are prerequisite for any interweaving of Ideas into a unified whole of discussion. Now to be sure, one must

keep in mind that even in Plato's dialectic of Ideas the pure concepts of reflection which properly belong to the *logos* are not distinguished from 'world concepts' with complete clarity. Thus in the *Sophist* just as in the *Timaeus* cosmological concepts like motion and rest are fused in a curious way with the concepts of reflection, difference and self-sameness. This fusion is the basis of Hegel's claim that dialectic makes the entirety of Ideas thinkable. At the same time, the fundamental distinction in Plato between 'categories corresponding to the polycombinable vowels of reality', as the *Sophist* puts it, and concepts with content, articulating a finite region of reality, remains unchallenged. In spite of this, Hegel's thesis rests on the assumption of unity here. For him objective concepts and concepts of reflection are only different stages of the same development. The concepts of 'being' and the concepts of 'essence' are completed in the doctrine of the 'concept'. Consequently what is realized there is a unity of thought and being which corresponds to Aristotle's conception of the category, on the one hand, just as much as it does to Kant's, on the other. The category is the basis of the idea of the new science of logic which Hegel expressly opposes to the traditional form of logic. As he puts it, after Kant had reached the standpoint of transcendental philosophy and taught us to think the *logos* of what is an object, i.e. its categorial constitution, logic could no longer remain formal logic limiting itself to the formal relationship of concept, judgment and syllogism.

Hegel seeks to give logic a new scientific character by developing the universal system of the concepts of the understanding into a 'whole' of science. His starting point is Kant's traditional theory. But while Hegel's system of categories is drawn from thought's reflecting upon itself, the categories are nevertheless no mere determinations of reflection. Kant himself, as a matter of fact, went so far as to call the determinations of reflection 'amphibolic', and he excluded them from his table of categories because they have an equivocal function in the determination of objects. Categories are not simply formal determinations of statements or thinking. Rather, they claim to grasp the order of reality in the form of a statement. That is the case in Aristotle, and Kant, for his part, in his theory of synthetic judgments *a priori* also seeks to explain why pure concepts of the understanding can be legitimately applied to experience of the world given in space and time. Now Hegel's conception of logic would unify this traditional doctrine of categories as the basic concepts of reality constituting the objects of the understanding with the pure determinations of reflection, which are the merely formal determinations of thought. Put another way, he attempts to restore the original objective function of the concept of 'form', which it had at first in Aristotle's metaphysics. It is in this way that Hegel's logic, which synthesizes the doctrine of Being and the doctrine of Essence in the doctrine of Concept, is to be understood. The doctrine of Being follows Kant's table of categor-

ies in so far as it includes quality and quantity. The doctrine of Essence and the doctrine of the Concept, on the other hand, explicate the categories of relation and modality. All of these possible determinations are now to be systematically derived within the turbulence of continual self-cancelling negativity.

The ideal of a science of logic which is to be brought to perfection in this way does not imply that such perfection might ever be completely attained by any individual. Hegel himself fully acknowledges that his own logic is a first attempt which lacks ultimate perfection. What he means, obviously, is that by pursuing multiple paths of derivation, one could work out, as he himself did in his teaching, the fine distinctions of what had only been given in outline form in the *Logic*. Hence, the methodological necessity in the interconnection of concepts as they unfold according to their specific dialectic is not necessity in the absolute sense. Indeed, one can discern, not only in the second printing of the first volume of the *Logic* as contrasted with the first, but also within one and the same text, that Hegel corrects himself even in his publications. He can say, for instance, that he wishes to present the same subject matter from another point of view, that one can arrive at the same result in another way etc. Thus Hegel's point is not only that in his *Logic* he did not complete the enormous task before him, but beyond that, in an absolute sense, that it cannot be completed.

It follows from this that a distinction must be made between the concepts as they operate in thought and the thematization of them. It is clear, for example, that one must always use the categories of Essence, for example, the determinations of Reflection, if one wants to make any statement at all. One cannot utter a sentence without bringing the categories of identity and difference into play. Still, Hegel does not begin his *Logic* with these categories, and it would have been of no help to him to do so. Even if he had decided to develop these categories right at the beginning, he would have had to presuppose both. Whoever makes statements uses different words and understands each word to mean this and not that. Both categories, identity and difference, are thereby already implied. The purpose Hegel has in mind for his system thus makes it necessary for him to resort to another construction. In the effort to derive the interrelationship of all categories from each other, a criterion is given in their determinancy *per se*. All categories are determinations of the content of knowledge, i.e. of the Concept. Since the content must be developed in its manifold determinations in order to arrive at the truth of the Concept, science must begin where there is the least determinacy. In that lies the criterion governing the construction of the *Logic*: there is to be steady advance from the most general (i.e. the least determinate) in which, in a manner of speaking, almost nothing is conceived of, to the

full content of the Concept. The entire content of thinking is to be developed in this way.

In more precisely characterizing the idea of the *Logic*, it is necessary too that we be fully conscious of the difference between its method and that of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In the Introduction to the *Logic*, Hegel himself cites the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* as a first example of his dialectical method. Thus, there is certainly no ultimate difference between the dialectic present in the *Phenomenology* and that in the *Logic*. The belief, based on the subsequent *Encyclopaedia*, that phenomenological dialectic did not yet represent the pure method of dialectic is thus untenable. For one thing, that is demonstrated by the fact that in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel, in characterizing its dialectical method as the scientific method, uses examples from the *Logic*. As a matter of fact, this Preface was written as an introduction to a system which was to consist of two parts: a 'Phenomenology of Spirit' and a 'Logic and Metaphysics'. Nevertheless, there are differences of which one must be aware if one is to grasp to what extent the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is also a science, i.e. to what extent development of its sequence of phenomena can be called a necessary one. In each case the method of dialectic must guarantee that the explication of the train of thought is not arbitrary, that there is no subjective intervention in its development, that there are no transitions from one point to the next which one 'selects' on one's own from different perspectives and which, therefore, remain external to the subject matter. On the contrary, the advance from one thought to the next, from one form of knowing to the next, must derive from an immanent necessity. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that advance is played out in a most intricate fashion.

The chapters in the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* are so constructed that, as a rule, the dialectical contradictions are first developed out of the concept which is being thematized at that particular moment, for example, out of the concept of Sense Certainty or Perception. Hence, the first development is of the concepts, as they are 'for us' in our reflection about them. Only then is the dialectic described which the consciousness itself experiences and which forces it to change as it changes its opinion of its object. For example, in thinking the sense certainty which fills it, consciousness can no longer believe itself to be thinking anything other than a 'universal "this"', and thus it must grant that what is meant is a 'universal', and that it perceives it as a 'thing'. It is true that that which proved to be the truth of the old way of knowing is like a new form of knowledge, which believes in a new object. But it comes as something of a surprise to learn, for example, that the 'universal this' is the concrete 'thing' and the certainty, that of perception. The dialectic of the thing and its properties, in which consciousness is now about to get caught, looks like a new hypothesis which is richer in content and

not a necessary consequence of what went before. Still, it appears to me that we are expecting too much here. The dialectic of the new form of knowing, e.g., of perception of the thing, in which the implicit contradictions are exposed, has the appearance of being an arbitrary hypothesis. However, the scientific rigour of the *Phenomenology* is not to be judged by that appearance. On the contrary, this dialectic which we spin out in our reflection is only an ancillary mediation performed on the natural presuppositions of consciousness, one which Hegel works in throughout the text. In contrast to it, the 'experience' which the consciousness itself has and which we observe and comprehend is the proper object of the phenomenological science. Only here does the immanent negativity of the concept develop, which drives the latter to self-sublimation and further determinations of itself. In this there is the necessity of 'science', and it is the same in the *Phenomenology* as it is in the *Logic*.

In the *Phenomenology* this scientific advance occurs as a movement back and forth between that which our consciousness believes and that which is actually implied in what it says. Thus, we always find a contradiction between what we want to say and what we actually have said. We are continually compelled to abandon what proved insufficient and again to set about saying what we mean. Herein consists the method of the *Phenomenology* by which it progresses to its goal, namely, to the insight that knowledge properly exists only where that which we believe and that which is are no longer different in any way.

In the *Logic*, on the other hand, there is no place at all allowed for belief. Here knowing is no longer different from its content. Indeed, the conclusion reached in the *Phenomenology* was precisely that the highest form of knowing is that in which there is no longer a difference between belief and what is believed. The first convincing demonstration that 'I' and 'thing' are the same is provided by the work of art. The work of art is no longer a 'thing' which needs to be put into relationship with something beyond itself in order to be comprehended; rather, it makes a 'statement', as we say, i.e. it itself dictates how it is to be comprehended. The science of philosophy presupposes the same standpoint of 'absolute' knowledge. Accordingly, in the foundation provided for it in its first part, i.e. in the 'logic' as the science of possible modes of being, we are concerned with the pure content of thoughts, with thoughts freed from any subjective opinionation of the one who thinks them. Nothing mystical is intended here. Rather, the knowing in art, religion and philosophy is common to all who think, so that in regard to it, it no longer makes any sense to differentiate one individual consciousness from another. The forms of the subject's certainty given in the statements of art, religion and philosophy, where the reservations of private belief no longer obtain, are therefore the highest shape spirit assumes. For the universality of reason consists precisely in its being free of any subjective one-sidedness.

If, then, private subjectivity is no longer to have a place in the *Logic*, the question might arise in attempting to understand the dialectic of the latter how a movement of concepts can develop there where no more movement of thought is experienced. Why is the system of concepts something in motion and moving itself and not something which thought merely runs through?

In the *Phenomenology* the course and goal of the movement of thought is clear. The movement there is the experience of human consciousness as it presents itself to the thinking observer. It cannot maintain its first assumptions, for example, that sense certainty is the truth, and is driven from one shape to the next, from consciousness to the highest objective forms of spirit and ultimately to the forms of absolute spirit in which 'you and I are the same soul'. But where should motion begin and where should a path be traversed in the *Logic*, where the sole concern is with the content of thought and not at all with its movement? That, precisely, is the problem of the *Logic* and, in fact, the most-discussed point in Hegel's entire systematic project. Even during his lifetime his opponents – the first and foremost of which was Schelling – raised the question of how in the *Logic* a movement of ideas could begin and then continue. I would like to show that this apparent difficulty arises only when one does not adhere strictly enough to the perspective of reflection in terms of which Hegel conceives of his transcendental logic.

In this regard, a reference to Plato's *Parmenides* is useful. There too we are drawn into a movement of thought, though, to be sure, it seems rather more like the agitation of enthusiasm or of 'logical' intoxication than a systematic movement towards a goal. There too it happens to thought, so to speak, that each concept calls for another. None stays by itself, but rather each ties itself in with another, and ultimately a contradiction emerges. In this fashion the *Parmenides* achieves its goal, namely, the demonstration that thinking an Idea in isolation is impossible. Something definite can only be thought of within a context of Ideas, which implies, to be sure, that its opposite can also be thought with equal legitimacy. Certainly there is nothing here of Hegel's method. What we have is more a kind of permanent turbulence, since no idea can be valid by itself and since the contradictory result at which thought inevitably arrives calls forth new hypotheses. Still, there is something 'systematic' implied here too, since the One, which reality is, is developed in the Many, which the thought of it contains. It is 'systematic' too in that the whole of it unrolls as though it were a dialectical interplay unfolding the extremes of the universal interconnectedness of the Ideas, on the one hand, and, on the other, of their separation. Finally, it is 'systematic' in the sense that a field of possible determinate knowledge is marked off.

What Hegel claims for his logic, however, is methodologically much more rigorous. Here there is no series of hypotheses which, having been

merely proposed, are, one after the other, reduced to inconsistency within the complex of ideas. In the *Logic* a starting point is firmly established and then a methodological procedure entered upon in which the knowing subject no longer intrudes. But how do things such as movement and progress commence in this construction of logical thought? That will have to be demonstrated using the beginning of the *Logic*.

To be sure, in taking this route, we must keep in mind that that which can properly be called Hegel's text is the same sort of thing referred to in the philosophy of the Middle Ages as a *corpus*. Hegel insisted repeatedly that introductions, comments, critical excursions etc. do not have the same legitimacy as the text, i.e. the course itself of the developing thought. Thus he treats his own introductions – and in the case of the *Logic*, which we are accustomed to read in the second edition, there are no fewer than four of these at the beginning – as things which do not yet have to do with the subject matter itself. They are concerned solely with the needs of external reflection, that is with relating the material to the conceptions which the reader, whom Hegel's comments are meant to serve, already brings with him. The actual beginning of the *Logic* consists of only a few lines, which, nevertheless, pose the essential problems of Hegelian logic: the beginning with the idea of Being, the identity of it with Nothing, and the synthesis of the two opposed ideas of Being and Nothing, called Becoming. According to Hegel, that constitutes the content of that with which science must begin.

The question of how movement gets into the *Logic* must be answered in reference to this beginning. Now it is clear, and Hegel makes use of the fact in his commentary, that it lies in the nature of any beginning to be dialectical. Nothing may be presupposed in it, and it clearly reveals itself as primary and immediate. But it still is a beginning only if it begins a development, and thus it is determined as a beginning in reference to that development, which is to say that it is 'mediated' by the latter. Now let us assume that Being is to be the indeterminate, immediate beginning of the *Logic*. Though it might be evident right away that a Being so abstract 'is nothing', how is it to be made evident that from this Being and Nothing a movement to Becoming develops? How, in the first place, does the movement of the dialectic get started from Being? Though it is convincing that one cannot think Becoming without thinking Being and Nothing simultaneously, the converse, that when one thinks Being and Nothing one must think Becoming, is not at all convincing. A transition is made, Hegel claims, but it plainly lacks the evidentness that would allow one to recognize it as dialectically necessary. In contrast, it is very easy to see, for example, that one must progress from the thought of Becoming to the thought of Existence. All becoming is a becoming of something which exists as a result of having become. That is an ancient truth, one already formulated by Plato in the *Philebus* as the *gegennēmenē*

ousia or *genesis eis ousian*, respectively. It lies in the very meaning of Becoming itself that it reaches determinancy in that which finally has become. Becoming thus leads to Existence. The transition from Being and Nothing to Becoming is, however, entirely different. Is there a dialectical transition here in the same sense? Hegel himself seems to single out this case as a special one when he comments that Being and Nothing 'are only different in belief'. That would mean that if both were purely thought by themselves, neither would be distinguishable from the other. Thus the pure thought of Being and the pure thought of Nothing would be so little different that their synthesis could not be a new, richer truth of thought. One way Hegel puts this is to say that Nothing 'bursts forth immediately' from Being (*L* I 85). Clearly, the expression 'bursts forth' is one carefully chosen to exclude any idea of mediation and transition. In accord with this it is said on page 79 that talk of such a transition implies the false appearance of separateness. And only in the case of the transition from Being and Nothing to Becoming does Hegel say that 'that passing from one to the other does not yet constitute a relationship' (p. 90). Thus that Nothing 'bursts forth' from Being is intended to mean that although in our belief Being and Nothing appear as the most extreme opposites, thought cannot succeed in maintaining a distinction here.

Now it is striking that Hegel speaks here of belief (*Meinen*), for distinguishing between belief and what is actually implied in what is said by the holder of that belief does not properly belong to the themes of the logic of 'pure thought' or, as stated on page 78, 'is not in the sequence of this exposition'. The *Logic* is concerned with what is present within thought as 'content' and develops the determinations of thought as it thinks this presence. Here nothing of the *Phenomenology's* juxtaposition of belief and what is believed remains. As a matter of fact, the pure thinking of the *Logic* presupposes the result of the dialectic in the *Phenomenology* and thus the subject matter of the *Logic* obviously cannot include belief. Of course, that does not mean that thinking could ever exist without beliefs. It is only meant to imply that between what is believed and what is actually thought and stated no difference at all exists any more. It is now a matter of indifference whether I believe or state something or someone else does. In thinking, that which is held in common is thought, that which excludes all private belief. 'I' is purified of itself' (p. 60).

Thus if there is recourse to belief at the beginning of the *Logic*, that is only because we are still at the level of incipient thought, or, put another way, because as long as we stay at the level of Being and Nothing as what is indeterminate, determination, i.e. thought, has not yet begun. For that reason the difference between Being and Nothing is limited to belief.

Implied in this, however, is that the progression to Becoming cannot be taken as a development in dialectical determination. If, as thought now determines, the difference of Being and Nothing is at the same time their complete lack of difference, then the question how Becoming emerges out of Being and Nothing no longer makes any sense at all. For such a question would certainly imply that there was a thinking which, in a manner of speaking, had not begun to think. Taken as thoughts for thinking, Being and Nothing are not at all determinations of thought. Accordingly, Hegel states explicitly that Being is empty intuition or empty thought *per se* and that the same holds for Nothing. 'Empty' does not mean that something is not, but rather that something is which does not contain what actually ought to be there, something deprived of what it could be. Thus, according to Hegel, light and darkness are two emptinesses to the extent that the complete content of the world consists of things which stand in the light and which eclipse each other. Empty thinking is thus thinking which is not yet that which thinking is at all. And, as a matter of fact, in this way the merging together of Being and Nothing in Becoming can easily be seen to be the proper truth for thought. Thus, saying that 'Being passes into Nothing and Nothing passes into Being' is actually a quite untenable way of putting the matter, because a Being already present and distinct from Nothing would thereby be presupposed. If one reads Hegel precisely, one will see that in fact he never speaks of such a transition at all. Instead he says that 'what the truth is, is neither Being nor Nothing, but on the contrary, that Being does not now pass over into Nothing or Nothing into Being, but rather has already passed over' – a transition, accordingly, which has always taken place already. Being and Nothing exist solely as passing over or transition itself, as Becoming. It seems to me most significant that Hegel is able to describe Being and Nothing starting with either intuition or thought (in so far as intuition or thought can be spoken of here). The difference between intuition or thought is itself an empty one as long as nothing determinate is given as content.

Thus Being and Nothing are more to be treated as analytic moments in the concept of Becoming – but 'analytic' here neither in the sense of an external reflection, which breaks down the unity of thought by pointing up multiple respects in it, nor in the sense which would imply that out of every synthesis the immanent contradiction can be recovered through analysis of the moments synthesized therein. Such an opposition presupposes things that are different. However, by virtue of their undifferentiatedness, Being and Nothing are only different in the pure and full content of the concept of Becoming.

Hegel's meaning here becomes completely clear when we see how he examines the aspects of Becoming, i.e. 'coming-into-being' and 'passing-away'. It is plain that in this examination the concept of Becoming will

be more specifically determined in so far as Becoming now is a coming-to-be or becoming-nothing. That is to say, Becoming is now determined as transition to something. It is semantically misleading, however, to think of this first determination of Becoming while presupposing the difference of Being and Nothing. In effect that would be to start with the determinate being which Hegel calls Existence and to think of coming-into-being as coming-into-existence or passing-away as passing-out-of-existence. But precisely that being from which the movement of Becoming is said to come or towards which it is said to go *is* only as the result of this process of determination. Since Being and Nothing acquire reality only in Becoming, in Becoming, as the mere transition 'from-to', neither one is determined in opposition to the other. What we have is thought's first truth: Becoming is not determined as coming-into-being and passing-away on the basis of a pre-given difference of Being and Nothing; rather, this difference emerges from Becoming in thinking the determination of Becoming as transition. Being and Nothing, respectively, 'become' in it. Coming-into-being and passing-away are thus the self-determining truth of Becoming. They balance each other out, as it were, in so far as there is in them no other determination than the directionality implied in 'from-to', which in turn is determined only by the difference in direction. The equilibrium between coming-into-being and passing-away of which Hegel speaks is only another way of expressing the utter lack of difference constitutive of Being and Nothing. Indeed, it is correct to say that it is open to us to see in Becoming something either coming into being or something passing away. Coming-into-being is, if viewed in reference to Existence, just as much passing-away and *vice versa* – as Hölderlin in his well-known treatise on 'Becoming in passing away' quite properly assumes.

If, then, we wish to be clear about the development from Becoming to Existence, the deeper sense of Hegel's dialectical deduction, i.e. that beyond what is immediately and generally illuminating in it, must be stated as follows: since the distinction between Being and Nothing is without content, there is also no determinateness present in the 'from' and 'to' constituting Becoming. All that is implied is that there is in every case a 'from-to' and that every 'from-to' can be thought of as a 'from-where' or a 'to-where'. Thus we have here the pure structure of transition itself. The special characteristic of Becoming is that its content, a being which is not nothing, issues from this structure. Thought has now gone so far as to determine itself henceforth as being which is not nothing. As Hegel expresses it, the still unity of Existence results replacing the shifting equilibrium of coming-into-being and passing-away.

Our retracing of Hegel's dialectical deduction here should now have enabled us to see why the question of how movement gets into the concept of Being cannot arise in the first place. For in fact, no movement

does get into Being. Being, as well as Nothing, may not be taken as existences already 'there' outside of thought, but rather as pure thoughts along with which nothing is to be imagined except themselves. They do not occur at all save in the movement of thought. Whoever asks how movement starts in Being should admit that in raising that question he has abstracted from the movement of thought within which he finds himself raising it. But instead, he leaves this reflection aside, thinking it 'external reflection'. Certainly in Being just as in Nothing, nothing determinate is thought. What is present is empty intuiting or thinking, but that means no real intuiting or thinking. But even if nothing other than empty intuiting or thinking is present, the movement of self-determination, that is of Becoming, is there. 'One has acquired great insight when one realizes that being and not-being are abstractions without truth and that the first truth is Becoming alone' (XII 306).

Our investigation of the beginning of the *Logic* has led us to the point where we can see that Hegel's claim of immanent necessity for the dialectical development of his thought is not touched by the usual objections to the fact that the *Logic* begins with Being and Nothing. If one keeps the purpose which Hegel assigned to the *Logic* in mind, his claim that its dialectic is scientific proves to be thoroughly consistent. It is another question, however, whether that purpose, which he proposes for his *Logic* as transcendental logic, is justified convincingly when even he himself relies on the natural logic which he finds in the 'logical instinct' of language. The expression 'instinct', which Hegel uses here, apparently means the unconscious, but unerring tendency towards a goal, a tendency such as that which seems to make animal behaviour virtually compulsive. For that is the nature of instinct: unconsciously and, precisely for that reason, unerringly, it does everything which, if one were aware of it, one would like to have done in order to reach a goal. When Hegel speaks of the logical instinct of language, he is thus pointing out the direction and object of thought – its tendency towards 'the logical'. In the first place, it should be noted that that term has quite a comprehensive meaning. And to be sure, there is reflected in language – not only in its grammatical, syntactical forms, but also in its nouns – that tendency of reason to objectify which was the essential characteristic of the Greek *logos*. What is thought and what is said is so constituted that one can point to it, as it were, even if one takes no position with regard to the truth of what is said and so that, on the contrary, even where the question of its truth is left unasked, the tendency of reason to objectify is actualized and precisely that gives thinking and speaking its special character of being universally objectifying. Thus Aristotle singled out the *logos apophantikos* from all other modes of speech because his sole concern was with making things plain (*déloun*). In so doing he established propositional logic, the

logic which prevailed completely until only very recently, when it was shown to have its limits by Hans Lipps' *Hermeneutic Logic* and Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*,³ to take two examples. Hegel, however, radicalizes the Aristotelian tradition not only by utilizing dialectic, but also, and indeed above all, by giving conceptual form in his *Logic* to the structure of dialectic itself. To be sure, the actual 'logical' determinations constitutive of the relationships of things thought to each other, for example, identity, difference, relation, proportion etc, or those determinations which Plato compared to the vowels (*Sophist* 253), are always operative only when wrapped in language, as it were. Thus in grammar there is a reflection of these logical structures. But Hegel's talk of the 'logical instinct' of language obviously implies more than that. It means that language leads us to logic because in logic the categories naturally at work in language are focused on as such. For Hegel, language thus reaches its perfection in the idea of logic, since the latter thinking goes through all of the determinations of thought occurring within itself and operating in the natural logic of language, and relates these to each other in thinking the Concept as such.

But the question arises whether language is in fact only an instinctive logic waiting to be penetrated by thought and conceptualized. Hegel notes the correspondence between logic and grammar and compares – without heed to the differences between languages and their grammatical bases – the life which a 'dead' grammar assumes in the actual use of a language to the life which logic assumes when one gives content to its dead form through use of it in positive sciences. But as much as logic and grammar might correspond to each other in that both are what they are in concrete use, the natural logic lying in the grammar of every language is by no means exhausted in the function of being a prefiguration of philosophic logic. Of course, logic in its traditional form is a purely formal science, and thus in any specific use made of it in the sciences or elsewhere, it is one and the same; the life which it assumes for the knower in such use is its proper life. On the other hand, the idea of logic which Hegel develops within the tradition of Kant's transcendental analytic is not formal in this sense. That, however, seems to me to have a consequence which Hegel would not desire. Specifically, its use in the sciences is by no means the only concretion of this logic. (Indeed the one-sidedness of neo-Kantianism lay in the fact that it turned the given fact of science into a monopoly.) On the contrary, in the 'variety of human language structures'⁴ there lies a range of very different anticipations of what is logical, which are articulated in the most diverse schemata of linguistic access to the world. And the 'logical instinct', which most assuredly does lie in language as such, can for that reason never be comprehensive enough to include all of what is prefigured in this vast

number of languages. Thus it could never really be elevated to its 'concept' by being transformed into logic.

If one keeps in mind the relationship which, as noted above, obtains between the operative use of concepts on the one hand and their express thematization on the other, and if one realizes that there is no possibility of getting around that relationship, one cannot remain indifferent to the problem which is implied here. What holds for the construction of the *Logic* – namely, that it must already presuppose and use the categories of reflection which it then claims to deduce dialectically – holds for every relationship between word and concept. With words too, there is no beginning *ex nihilo*. Nor is it the case that a concept could be determined as a concept without the usage of the word with all of its many meanings playing a role. Thus it does not appear coincidental to me that Hegel's acute analysis and dialectical deduction of categories is always most convincing where he appends a historic derivation of the word. Concepts are only what they are in their functioning, and this functioning always rests on the natural logic of language. Strictly speaking, it is not a matter of our making use of words when we speak. Though we 'use' words, it is not in the sense that we put a given tool to use as we please. Words themselves prescribe the only ways in which we can put them to use. One refers to that as proper 'usage' – something which does not depend on us, but rather we on it, since we are not allowed to violate it.

Now Hegel, assuredly, is conscious of this when he speaks of the 'natural logic'. The concept too is not a tool of our thinking; rather our thinking obeys it and finds the prefiguration of it in the natural logic of language. Precisely for this reason the task of the *Logic* – to thematize what 'one thinks', in respect to itself, in 'pure thinking' – confronts us with an insoluble problem. Hegel discovers this problem and takes it to be that of the inherent disquietude of the dialectical process. Nevertheless, that process is supposed to be superseded in absolute knowing as thinking of the totality. The question arises, however, whether this 'supposed to be' does not suffer from the 'immorality' of a 'supposed to be' which is never able to overcome its untruth.⁵

Truly, our human nature is so much determined by finitude that the phenomenon of language and thinking wherein we seek to get hold of it must always be viewed as governed by the law of human finitude. Seen in this way, language is not a transitional form of thinking reason which is perfected when thought becomes completely transparent to itself. It is not a self-effacing and temporary medium of thought or merely its 'casing'. And its function is not at all limited to merely making plain what is being thought of beforehand. On the contrary, a thought first attains determinate existence in being formulated in words. Thus, it turns out that the movement of language goes in two directions: it aims towards the objectivity of the thought, but it also returns from it in the reabsorp-

tion of all objectification into the sustaining⁶ power and shelter of the word. When Hegel undertook to uncover 'the logical' as that 'innermost' in language and to present it in its entire dialectical self-differentiation, he was correct in seeing this undertaking as the attempt to reconstruct in thought the thoughts of God before the creation – a reality prior to reality. But even that reality or 'Being' standing at the beginning of this contemplative repetition in our thought, the content of which is ultimately to be objectified fully in the concept, always presupposes language in which thinking has its own abode. The *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Hegel methodically leads up to the beginning of pure thought, does not furnish us with this presupposition, but rather it, too, constantly presupposes the functioning of language which sustains and accompanies it. Thus it itself remains tied to the idea of total objectification of self and fulfils itself in absolute knowing. Its insurmountable limitation becomes manifest in our experience of language. What makes it possible for language to speak is not 'Being' as the abstract immediacy of the self-determining concept. Rather, it is much better described in terms of the being which Heidegger refers to as a 'clearing'. A clearing, however, implies both something disclosed and something still enclosed.

A kind of thinking, able to conceive of the functioning of language as revealing and objectifying but at the same time as holding back or concealing as well, can find in Hegel's attempt at logic only one side of the truth – that of the perfected determination of the concept. Still to have established only this one-sidedness is not sufficient. Were it taken to be, then an essential concern common to both Heidegger and Hegel would have been overlooked. Specifically, Hegel's logic indirectly points beyond itself, since Hegel's turn of phrase, 'the logical', of which he is so fond, indicates that the essential impossibility of completing the concept is acknowledged by him. 'The logical' is not the quintessence or totality of all determinations of thought but the dimension which underlies all posited determinations of thought, just as a geometric continuum underlies all posited points. Hegel calls it the 'speculative' dimension and speaks of the 'speculative statement' which, as opposed to all statement sentences referring a predicate to a subject, demands a retreat of thought into itself. The speculative statement maintains the mean between the extremes of tautology on the one hand and self-cancellation in the infinite determination of its meaning on the other. Here lies Hegel's great relevance for today: the speculative statement is not so much a statement as it is language. It calls for more than objectification in dialectical explication. While it does call for such explication, at the same time the speculative statement brings dialectical movement to a standstill. Through it thought is made to see itself in relationship to itself. In the language form (not of a judgment as a statement, but in the judgment as it is *spoken* in a verdict, for example, or in the curse) the event of its being said is felt,

and not merely what is said.⁷ *Mutatis mutandis*, in the speculative statement the event of thinking is present. The speculative statement which challenges and stirs thought in this way thus unmistakably 'consists in itself' as do, more generally, words of poetry and the being of the artwork. In the 'consisting in itself' of poetry and artworks there is an assertion which 'stands' self-contained. And just as the speculative statement demands dialectical 'exposition', the work of art demands interpretation, even though its content may never be exhausted in any particular interpretation. My point is that the speculative statement is not a judgment restricted in the content of what it asserts any more than a single word without a context or a communicative utterance torn from its context is a self-contained unit of meaning. The words which someone utters are tied to the continuum in which people come to understand each other, the continuum which determines the word to such an extent that it can even be 'taken back'. Similarly, the speculative statement points to an entirety of truth, without being this entirety or stating it. Hegel conceives of this entirety which is not in actual existence as the reflection in itself through which the entirety proves to be the truth of the concept. Having been compelled by the speculative statement to follow the path of conceptual comprehension, thought unfolds 'the logical' as the immanent movement of its content.

Though within this tendency towards 'the logical' it is the concept which is thought of as the completed determination of the indeterminate, and though in that concept only the one aspect of language (its tendency towards 'the logical') is completely developed, reflection's being or consisting in itself nevertheless continues to have a disconcerting similarity to the 'consisting in itself' of the word and of the artwork which bear truth contained (*geborgen*) within themselves. Indeed, there is a hint here of that conception of 'truth' which Heidegger seeks to formulate in his thought as the 'event of being' and which opens up the space for the movement of reflection, as well as for all knowledge, in the first place.

Again and again Heidegger himself bears witness to this wider inference of 'the speculative' and the temptation it presents. This is revealed not only in the fascination Hegel's dialectic has for him, in the critical analyses which it prompts and in his effort to differentiate his own philosophy from it. Beyond all of this there are occasional direct references to Hegel, rich in illuminating advertences, which we ought now to include in our discussion. Most important of these is the sketch of an idea found in his *Nietzsche*,⁸ vol. 2, p. 464:

Reflection, grasped within the history of being in its being-there-ness. The light shining back into *alētheia* without the latter itself being experienced as such and being grounded and coming into its proper presence (*Wesen*). The homelessness of the shining back of what shows itself . . .

man's settlement in one of his proper places of presence. Reflection – certainty, certainty – self-consciousness.

Here Heidegger refers to reflection as a 'shining back into *alētheia* without the latter itself . . . coming into its proper presence'. Thus he himself relates reflection to that which he conceives of as *alētheia* and which he calls here the being of *alētheia* as it presents itself. To be sure, establishing this relationship amounts to making a distinction at the same time: the dimension of 'the logical' is not the sphere of *alētheia* which is illumined by language. For language is an 'element' within which we live in a very different sense from reflection.⁹ Language completely surrounds us like the voice of home which prior to our every thought of it breathes a familiarity from time out of mind. Heidegger refers to language as the 'house of being', in which we dwell with such ease. To be sure, there occurs in it, indeed precisely in it, the disconcealment of what is present to the point of the objectification of the latter in a statement. But being itself, which has its abode there, is not disconcealed as such, but keeps itself concealed in the midst of all disconcealment occurring in speaking; concealed as in speaking, language itself remains essentially concealed. Thus Heidegger is not saying in any way that reflection takes the measure of this original 'clearing'. Rather, he speaks of reflection as the shining back of what is showing itself; while never ceasing to be underway within the 'clearing', reflection seeks to get this shining back in view before itself. In this respect reflection, the movement of logic, is homeless: it can stay nowhere. That which shows itself, i.e. that which is encountered as the object of thought and of the process of determination, has the 'object's' essential mode of being encountered. That accounts for its insurmountable 'transcendence' for thought, which in turn prevents us from being at home in it. The process of comprehension which aims nevertheless at eliminating this transcendence and which Hegel unfolds as the basic movement of self-recognition in the other is for that reason continually thrown back on itself. As a result it has the character of the self-assuring process of self-consciousness. This too is a manner of appropriation, and as such, it provides the 'housing' which has given Western civilization its essential form – making what is another one's own means the conquest and subjugation of nature through work. Heidegger is not striking up the song of cultural criticism here. Rather, in the comment which we are explicating he speaks of what has occurred as 'man's settlement in one of his proper places of presence'. Because this 'settlement' constitutes all that exists as 'object', it is in an essential sense, he maintains, the 'expropriation event (*Ent-eignung*) of what exists'.¹⁰ What exists does not belong to itself because it is entirely there in reference to us. Viewed in this way, Hegel appears as the logical consummation of a path of thought going back a long way – an end in which the subsequent

philosophical phenomena of Marx and logical positivism are fore-shadowed.

Nevertheless, that which escapes this perspective of thought comes to light here – that which Schelling sensed first and which Heidegger developed into the question about the being which is not the being of existents. The shining back of what shows itself – incidentally, a literal translation of 'reflection' – is certainly different from the original 'clearing' in which what is comes to show itself in the first place. There is indeed another familiarity, one more basic than that acquired and cultivated in appropriation, which prevails where word and language are at work.

Still, it is nothing less than the complete fathoming of an essential course of human thought when Hegel in 'reflection in itself' thinks the light 'shining back' which all objectification casts. In Hegel's reflection-in-itself, which unfolds as the movement of the *Logic*, there is preserved a truth which is not that of consciousness and its opposite, that is a truth, precisely, which in no way claims to be the 'appropriation' of what shows itself, but rather distinguishes such 'external' reflection as that, from the reflection of thought into itself. That is what emerges in Hegel's *Logic*. If one traces the experience of consciousness in the way Hegel does in the *Phenomenology*, namely, in such a way that one learns to recognize everything alien as one's own, one sees that the lesson actually taught to consciousness is none other than the experience which thinking has with its 'pure' thoughts. Still it is not only the *Phenomenology* which points beyond itself, i.e. in its case, to the *Logic*. For its part, does not the logic of the self-unfolding concept necessarily point beyond itself too, that is point back to the 'natural logic' of language? The self of the concept (in which pure thinking conceives of itself) is, in the last analysis, nothing of the sort which displays itself, but rather, like language, something at work in everything which is. The determinations of the *Logic* are not without the 'casing' of language in which thought is sheathed. The medium of reflection in which the progression of the *Logic* moves is for its part, however, not sheathed in language like the conceptual determination at any given point, but rather, as an entirety, as the 'logical', is in shining back, grounded in illumination of language. Indirectly, that is made evident in Heidegger's note.

Were Hegel's idea of logic to include full acknowledgement of its relationship to the natural logic, which he treats on the level of reflective consciousness, he would have to draw close again to the classical origin of his idea in Plato's dialectic and Aristotle's conquest of sophism through logic. As it stands, his logic remains a grand realization of the goal of thinking 'the logical' as the foundation of all objectification. Thus, Hegel brought to its completion the development of traditional logic into a transcendental 'logic of objectivity' – a development which began with Fichte's 'Doctrine of Science'. But the language-ness of all thought con-

tinues to demand that thought, moving in the opposite direction, convert the concept back into the valid word. The more radically objectifying thought reflects upon itself and unfolds the experience of dialectic, the more clearly it points to what it is not. Dialectic must retrieve itself in hermeneutics.

Notes

1 Gadamer's earliest published book, *Platos Dialektische Ethik*, thematizes the Socratic technique of guiding discussion. See in particular section 2, 'Das Gespräch und der Logos', pp. 22ff, and section 5, 'Der Sokratische Dialog', pp. 40ff. (Trans.).

2 See L II 23, 'die Reflexionsbestimmungen' (Trans.).

3 Hans Lipps, *Untersuchungen zu einer Hermeneutischen Logik*, Frankfurt, 1953, and Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Trans.).

4 'Verschiedenheit des Menschlichen Sprachbaus' (Wilhelm von Humboldt) (Trans.).

5 The reference here is to Hegel's critique of Fichte's attempt to build idealism on an ethical foundation. Cf. Hegel's critique of *Sollen* (L I 111), where he treats *Sollen* as a form of the 'bad infinity' (Trans.).

6 *Bergend*. A key word – tied to *Unverborgenheit* – in Heidegger's thought. See, for example, 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes', *Holzwege*, Frankfurt, 1963, pp. 7ff. Implied is the double sense of concealing, on the one hand, of sheltering and sustaining, on the other. Things which are in 'truth' (*alētheia*) are *unverborgen*, which is to say disconcealed, and at the same time grounded in their sheltering source (*geborgen*). Gadamer sees language as just such a source of what is, hence his phrase 'die bergende Gewalt des Wortes' (Trans.).

7 At this point Gadamer comes very close to developing a theory of what Austin refers to as illocutionary meaning. Cf. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, chapter 8, pp. 94ff. Still his basic concern remains quite different from Austin's. For Gadamer the issue is not 'how to do things with words', but rather how words and language constitute the significance of the world in which we find ourselves underway. Gadamer's questioning here derives from transcendental philosophy – he is asking about the 'condition of the possibility' of our experience, to use Kant's phrase, but from a different ontological perspective from that of Kantian philosophy. The 'condition of the possibility' is not to be grounded in the subject, but rather the subject in it. Thus instead of asking how we do things with words, Gadamer asks, in effect, how words do things with us. (Trans.)

8 Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Pfullingen, 1961.

9 The world 'element' figures prominently in Heidegger's thought after his 'Kehre'. Cf. *Über den Humanismus*, Bern, 1954 p. 56 (Trans.).

10 *Ent-eignung* is one of Heidegger's multiple variations on the stem *eigen*. Cf. *Identität und Differenz*, Pfullingen, 1957, especially p. 33 (Trans.).

Hegel: a non-metaphysical view

Klaus Hartmann

Introduction

In spite of the so-called breakdown of the Hegelian system shortly after Hegel's death, this system has held its own as an important body of thought. Admittedly, it has suffered a setback under the impact of neo-positivism and language-orientated philosophy, particularly in the Anglo-American countries; Hegel's philosophy has been branded dubious metaphysics, and indeed it counts as its worst specimen. But then again, Hegel's philosophy has stayed very much alive, if largely through the derivative uses made of it in Marxism and existentialism. In either case, credit devolves on the precursor, which furnished the theoretical means employed in more recent doctrine.

However, discounting such derivative uses of Hegel's philosophy, do we know what to make of Hegel, do we have a convincing line of approach and appreciation? In fact, we find a somewhat disconcerting picture: some think of Hegel's philosophy much in the way of philosophers extolling a certain principle or dominant feature. Hegel ranks as the philosopher of spirit, with spirit standing for the real purged of all unreality. This view may have had its refined exponents, such as F. H. Bradley, and yet we balk at the suggestion that, for Hegel, the real is something different from what we think it is. It may be argued that Hegel's way of persuading us of a dominant, if out-of-the-way, feature or principle of the real is logical, and so it may seem that his supposed relegation of reality to spirit is correct. And yet, on this view, Hegel becomes an idealist in the sense of 'spiritualist', a metaphysician of a one-sided persuasion. He appears as a reductionist of a curious sort, espousing a richness of spirit rather than an impoverishment. Obviously, the opposite kind of metaphysics, materialism, is not far to seek, counterpointing the one one-sidedness by another. Feuerbach, Marx and

especially Engels and Lenin were quick to propose precisely such a metaphysical counterpart to Hegel's philosophy.

Another recent expounder of Hegel, J. N. Findlay (in his *Hegel: A Re-examination*, London and New York, 1958), is more wary in matters of metaphysics: inspired by language-orientated philosophy, he claims that in Hegel we have a system of affinities or of non-strict, loose, probabilistic implications between concepts.¹ Hegel appears first and foremost as a discerning connoisseur of the real in its manifold aspects; as for theory, his device is one of linking his finds in terms of probable conceptual connections or relationships of affinity, in short, a device affording a plausible perusal of world content. The difficulty is, however, that on this view Hegel's theoretical achievement, the dialectic, hinges on an irrationality, on likelihood and affinity rather than on strictness; nor can the ground of such affinity be stated. Findlay's view is appreciative and accommodating, and yet unsatisfactory because it underplays the theoretical claims made by Hegel.

I Preliminary considerations

If the two conflicting views mentioned can count as representative, we are faced with the need for another proposal to make sense of Hegel. Such a third view may take its clue from the realization that what Hegel wishes to give is an account of the determinations of the real, or of what is. If we follow his final and considered attempt at providing an introduction to his philosophy, in the Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia* of 1827, revised in 1830, his aim is to transform what is 'found', what is 'experienced fact', into a 'presentation and reconstruction' (*Nachbildung*) of thought in terms of thought (*Enc.* §12). Thought, or reason, has a claim to 'satisfaction in point of form' (*Enc.* §9): it is the said transformation of what is found, or granted as a fact or as a deliverance of science or naive philosophy, into a reconstruction in the form of rational necessity, or in a *priori* form.

For this to be possible, there has to be a vehicle – items of thought, appropriations of the real by thought – and a procedure for relating these items. The vehicle of reconstruction will be concepts or categories;² the procedure will be the dialectic. It is a procedure to link up categories so as to let them result in a system that satisfies reason, i.e. which integrates any major determination of the real in a reconstructive scheme.

It is essential to realize in this context that 'category' or 'concept' will be implicitly defined as such determination as permits of inclusion in an integrative, or reconstructive, scheme. On the other hand, the aim will be to accommodate all major determinations hitherto regarded as 'being the case', i.e. all categories discovered or claimed by philosophy, with

some more of Hegel's own proposing thrown into the bargain. Hegel wishes to 'present' the finds of experience, science and philosophy as 'digests' of thought and to devise their reconstruction in terms of thought. Thought, the big eater of what other purveyors of knowledge have contributed, can escape the dietetic restrictions of observation or picturing; once in possession of content in the form of thought, it can follow its own ways of connecting the various items with one another with a view to achieving rational satisfaction.

Conversely, the procedure permitting of such reconstruction will be implicitly defined as that compound relation of affinity which categories or concepts bear to one another. Thus, Hegel's philosophy is a *theory of categories* or of such determinations of the real as permit of reconstruction and are thus borne out as categories. These, in turn, have to coincide with what must be granted in view of experience, science and philosophy. So far, then, we are in close rapport with Findlay's account.

II The categorial programme as a systemic programme

But how does the said reconstruction work in fine? What sort of reconstruction does satisfy reason? And how is such a reconstruction possible? Let us consider some requirements: the reconstruction has to be presuppositionless, since otherwise certain categorial items would be left unaccounted for. This commits the reconstruction to a linear development, to a sequence or genealogy of categories, such that each item can be regarded as 'justified' in view of its antecedents. But, clearly, the sequential forward reading cannot be the whole story. How could a presuppositionless beginning lead to anything; how could the absence of determination lead to richness? Thus there must be operative a contrary consideration, pointing from the ordered richness of granted content back to its antecedents. The linear progression cannot be deduction: it can only be reconstruction; what it is heading for is granted. The question merely is how to dispose categorial items in a sequence that could be considered an 'explanation' of categories, regressively, and a disclosure, or 'presentation', of further categories, progressively.

And yet, progression and regression do not suffice: we cannot imagine a sequence traversing all manner of categorial content without further support. Such necessary support is afforded by the architectonic. The progression will have to begin with the presuppositionless, the zero case of categorization (being); it will lead to the fulfilled case of categorization, where thought categorizes itself as having enclosed all determination (concept). In between, there will be an area where being is regarded as on the way to such selfhood or closure, the area of essence. The architectonic thus provides for a basic ordering of material at large, but it also

permits of application in any one sphere or area, such that categories will be arranged both by their subservience to being, essence or concept, and within each sphere or area by relative proximity to immediacy or closure. Being may be categorized as comparatively immediate or closed, and similarly in the other cases. Or, to use Hegel's terms, the guiding perspectives are being-in-itself and being-for-itself, both in the overall arrangement and in each sphere or area. Indeed, each locus exhibits in-itself potential changing over to for-itself potential, thereby giving way to another category. Or, to put it in yet another way: the concepts being-in-itself and being-for-itself have a substantive application to ontological areas at large and a formal or methodological application, both being governed by the architectonic.

With this complex unity of linearity, progression and regression, and architectonic, we have the basic structure of Hegel's *Logic*, a work that can be called an 'ontology'.³ The *Logic* provides an ordered sequence or genealogy such that, in view of its antecedents, the result (thought or Idea) appears as an explanandum capable of a rational explanation. The result, in turn, is the sum-total of its genealogy making the genealogy possible, for, in order for this to be established, thought, the presumption of a unity of thought and being, has to be operative all along. Thus thought is the ground established as a ground.

The point easily lost sight of is that the said methodological structure provides a new meaning to categories that already have meaning; something is reconstructed as the zero case of thought: being or immediacy. We have a new meaning wedded to a known one. In the initial or zero case, the *Logic* has to undercut determinacy in order to provide explanatory antecedents of determinacy. This is why, in this case, it has to propose a sequence that points to, rather than determines, distinctions as determinations determinate in view of their opposites, which would pre-empt determinacy, the very thing to be explained in the first place. Similarly, being appears under the new guise of indifference: it is seen to enter into relations external to, or not conceptually ingredient in, it; it is permissive of plural instantiation. Or, to take another case, that of essence: essence is reconstructed as unity of relation, as being in unity with a vantage point *for* which it is. We have a 'pattern', a 'structure', halfway between being and concept, which is instanced in each essence, though it is not itself any particular essence, in the manner of Aristotelian essences. The final stance, concept, or thought or Idea stands for complete integration, for non-difference and non-indifference, for closure or all-inclusion; i.e. all these are the meaning of the terminal category. In it, rationality has come full circle.

What is important to realize is that the new meaning given to categories, in what may be called a 'hermeneutic' of rationality, is due to systemic considerations. Meaning is enhanced by systemic meaning; systemic con-

siderations constitute the explanans of categorial meaning. A category is 'understood', explained or justified in terms of its function with respect to making ontology – the satisfaction of reason – possible; in such a context it is immediate, determinate or inclusive of otherness, and therefore infinite, whatever the case may be.

In other words, the systemic programme – to give a reconstruction of the real in a manner satisfactory to reason – provides for the successful execution of the categorial programme. It constitutes an immanence of thought, an overall sphere in which determinations are viewed as from within, from the stance of thought, and placed with respect to their 'ontological' potential.

III The dialectic as implementing procedure

But is the execution of the programme not a mere play of thought with itself, as Feuerbach suggests when he says that the Idea 'plays a game'? The notion of 'category' will provide the answer to the question. A category is the claim that being matches what thought thinks of it. We could not account for being in terms other than those of thought. Thus thought, to set up its own genealogy, or the justification of its match with reality, has to regard its antecedent determinations as stances of grasped being, or of being grasped in various degrees of coincidence with thought. There are categories for comparatively incomprehensible things, such as being; for comparatively comprehensible ones, such as essence; and for altogether comprehensible ones, such as thought itself. Thus the categorial claim is that being, to the extent that it is categorized, enters into thought and makes a difference to thought *pro tanto*; and yet it is thought that has to provide the means for establishing such ingredience of being into thought. What is a 'match' of being and thought has to be considered a coincidence, an identity of being and thought.

The procedure to establish the ingredience of being into thought, or to establish the rationality of being in a series of categorial determinations, is accordingly to consider the otherness of being with respect to thought as a negation, and the difference such otherness makes to thought as 'determinate negation'. The negative and the overcoming of the negative are constitutive of the movement of understanding. In his effort to point to antecedents of determinacy, Hegel introduces the negative at the very beginning of the *Logic* as the account thought gives of being prior to any determination. All incumbent determinations are developed from this conflict of being and negation which, in the zero case, in the absence of any determination, is the indifference of the two. Hegel, in developing determinations from such a conflict of being and negation, is not guilty of mistaking negation for otherness or irreducible novelty, as some schol-

ars of neo-Kantian persuasion have charged. Rather, we should say that, in order to rationalize otherness, Hegel has to transform it into the negation of what is already appropriated by thought. This replacement of otherness or novelty by negation in the service of comprehension is what is called the dialectic. In a dialectical framework, being appears as the complement to thought, exhaustible in moves of negation and in determinate, or double, negation. Clearly, this is possible only if the explanatory sequence is not deduction, but only reconstruction, granting categorial content. And yet we truly 'understand' content only by construing it in terms of negation and double negation, by placing content in an immanence of thought. We grant not only content, but that such content can be viewed as the synthetic result of a construction moving in a forward direction. Negation and double negation are the artificial means of regarding the synthesis of a granted content as established in a forward reading. Obviously, for this to be possible, systemic requirements have to be granted.

It appears from the above that the question that haunted Bradley, namely, whether everything in the real stands in internal relations to everything else, has to be dismissed. This would be a metaphysical way of raising an issue that, with greater pertinence, is discussed in terms of intracategorial systemic requirements. And yet the position adopted by Hegel is not an 'as if' position; on the contrary, it asserts established rationality. Again, this rationality is not omniscience: we do not come to 'know' things we did not know when we read through Hegel's categorial arrangement; we merely learn about the rational explanation of categories. From this angle, Hegel's position in the *Logic* is an innocuous one, as it cannot possibly conflict with knowledge.

With this interpretation – so far addressed to Hegel's *Logic* only – the issue between the above views of Hegel in terms of one-sided metaphysics and in terms of non-strict logical implications between concepts has been decided by invoking a third view. Over against the metaphysical reading, Hegel's philosophy appears to us as categorial theory, i.e. as non-metaphysical philosophy, or as a philosophy devoid of existence claims and innocent of a reductionism opting for certain existences to the detriment of others. The only claim is that the categories granted for reconstruction be not empty or without instantiation. Over against the other reading in terms of conceptual affinity, the present interpretation remains in close rapport, but it can answer the case for strictness in the affirmative. Hegel's philosophy is a highly theoretical edifice exhibiting strictness of construction. To say that the implications are non-strict, as Findlay does, means to apply an external standard, that of formal logic. The dialectic is strict, however, if viewed in systemic terms. In it, the philosopher is free to devise and maintain strictness, since he legislates in the interests of rationality. Quite in keeping with this contention, Hegel identifies the

a priori with freedom (*Enc.* §12), so why should reason not be free to be strict?

One may, of course, ask whether the dialectic, with its aspects of linearity and architectonic, is 'regular', whether there is a pattern it has to conform to, serving as a criterion for its strictness. Such a paradigmatic pattern, however, has to be repudiated, since the dialectic is simply the result of reconstructing a given set of categories, thereby creating its own pattern. Similarly, if one says that the architectonic is an imposition on pre-existing material, such criticism is mistaken, since the architectonic can be taken as an innocuous ordering in the interest of rationality. But what about the 'single line of reasoning' Findlay objects to?⁴ Indeed, what seems strained about the dialectic is the single-file perusal of categories; many transitions, especially where they connect one area with another rather than one category with another within an area, may seem unpersuasive. Quite generally the sequential or linear aspect of the dialectic invites puzzlement; by itself, it seems inconclusive. But all that this puzzlement means is that the linear movement is not, by itself, a complete description of the dialectic. If the linear forward reading were, by itself, conclusive, we would have the impossible case of deduction. The linear scheme is an essential aspect, since, otherwise, presuppositionlessness would be violated, explanation would lapse. But, to be complete, the dialectic requires the regressive reading and the architectonic.

By the same token, the dialectic is not the traversal of the genus-and-species pyramid from bottom to top. Although incompatible species are compatible in their genus, so that a movement from species to genus would be one of avoiding contradiction by escaping to the next higher concept, a movement from species to genus is merely a movement to higher abstractions, unsupported by the architectonic. Accordingly, such a movement, though superficially similar to Hegel's dialectic, cannot be an ontology of thought as the ground for categories.

Incidentally, precisely for the reason that the dialectic constitutes a systemic ordering, we need not insist on each transition or on each categorial item included in Hegel's philosophy. One might, for example, discard parts of the philosophy of nature: the richness of natural phenomena is such that no convincing single-file perusal can be offered. Accordingly, a charitable reading of this part of Hegel's philosophy would surrender detail and retreat to a higher level of abstraction while maintaining the basic programme of ordering phenomena in a systemic fashion. Hegel sometimes lapses into mere catalogue, but this does not mean that the dialectic has no strictness to it. It may simply be overextended.

IV Solutions

As may have become clear, attention to categorial and systemic features in Hegel's philosophy, or a categorial and systemic approach to it on our part, affords a full appreciation of Hegelian solutions to problems and provides us with an organon to rule on certain problems irksome to Hegel scholarship. Turning to solutions first, we see a major achievement on the part of Hegel in the fact that he tells us – or, rather, retells us in an explanatory fashion – what such and such is. Outstanding examples in this connection are all avatars of subjectivity. Only a dialectical stance, so it emerges, is able to say what a subject, what concept or spirit, is. Such felicities of Hegel's, simply in terms of enlightenment, are coincident with his extending the notion of category beyond the Aristotelian scope of substance and accident to all manner of unity structures, including, as prime cases, subjectivity and essence. If we consider the inability of Aristotle, in *Metaphysics Z*, to grasp 'ontologically', in the spirit of his *Categories*, the relation of essence and matter resulting in a substance, we see the progress achieved by Hegel. He succeeds in supplying 'ontological' meaning to all manner of content.

A similar achievement lies in the categorization of what, for Kant, had remained a case apart, namely, space and time. The categorial accounts Hegel gives seem perfectly successful, especially in the case of time. We must not, it is true, expect of categories such as these, or of any category for that matter, a panacea for all problems. Categories are not the sum-total of axioms necessary for disciplines such as geometry or mathematics, and *mutatis mutandis* for other disciplines, to get on their feet. Categorial theory answers only the peculiar questions a philosopher may have as to what it is that a certain discipline is about. Categorial questions are luxury questions.

The categorial and systemic approach may also persuade us of the felicity, in Hegel, of dividing philosophy into a *Logic* and a 'Realphilosophie' or philosophy of nature and of spirit. The *Logic* contains all ontological distinctions of note on a comparatively abstract plane, discounting the difference externality might make categorially. If there are to be more categories, or if the categorial scheme is to be extended to externality, this project would mean to regard such more-'concrete' determinations as 'principled' by the categorial corpus of the *Logic*. Or, the other way around: to show that the *Logic* gives instances of categorial unity, or successfully establishes unities of thought and being, one has to show that this claim of the *Logic*, which is by itself a proposal made in immediacy, constituting the beginning of Hegel's philosophy, has consequences that legitimate the *Logic*. The philosopher of the real proves the point of the *Logic* by devising further determinations within the categorial scheme. The pertinence of the categories of the *Logic* is proved intracategorially,

by showing that they give rise to further categories that we already know. (The pertinence of those further categories of 'Realphilosophie' cannot, in turn, be confirmed by a third 'cycle' or, what this boils down to, by a 'realization of philosophy'. The Young Hegelians, among them Cieszkowski and the early Marx, advocated such a further stage to Hegelianism. However, a practical realization of categories to prove their pertinence, or the pertinence of reason, transcends categorial philosophy altogether and, as will be seen presently, leads to paradox.) In this context, another remark on transitions may be appropriate. With our systemic understanding we realize that the notorious transition from Idea to nature, or from the *Logic* to 'Realphilosophie', can only be a metaphor. The rationale is systemic, or on a second-order level, not one of the first-order relatedness of concepts bearing an affinity to one another. Clearly, the systemic approach can back up Hegel.

Another virtue of Hegel's is the richness of his categories in the domain of 'Realphilosophie' (discounting the philosophy of nature, which requires a charitable reading). One need only consider what it means to be offered an ontological account of what society or the state is. One may have to disagree where Hegel extends his categorial account of either in the direction of substantive theory, since it is indebted to more than the categories in question would provide for. Still, the achievement in understanding is supreme. Taking everything together, the virtue of Hegel's philosophy is that it offers a comprehensive scheme of explanation for the world's 'what', the limitation being that such 'what' can claim to be categorial, i.e. reconstructible.

Turning to solutions inherent in Hegel's position as a whole, we note that categorial and systemic analysis can settle the issue of idealism in Hegel. If Hegel's aim is seen to be the reconstruction of categories, then it is obvious that such an effort can take only the form of an intracategorial relating of concepts, with the dialectic as the theoretical procedure providing for the desired rationalization. It is not, for this reason, that Hegel neglects reality. The categorial stance adopted means, in fine, that the Feuerbachian and Marxian criticism is mistaken; namely, that Hegel's system forms a totality set over against another totality, the world,⁵ or that a Hegelian category disregards that of which it is the category. Under the Marxian programme, the integration of philosophy and the world, or the practical realization of philosophy, would only be brought about if the higher categories proposed by Hegel in the philosophy of spirit or, more concretely, in the *Philosophy of Right*, were instanced by each individual co-constituting the entity in question; i.e. if those categories were realized in what, for Hegel, would be totality of a lower categorial order, namely, that of 'species life' or 'association'. Hegel's categorial theory, on the other hand, can 'place' Marx's counter-recipe and show it to be a category mistake, namely, the mistake of regarding an abstract

categorial level as a concrete level that, to add to the paradox, is supposed to be the realization of the concrete categorial level.

Another virtue of Hegel's, given the modern philosophical scene, may be seen in the position he would take with respect to problems besetting modern, language-orientated philosophy. We hardly need modern phenomenology, which analyses the problem of reference in thought and intuition, to remind us of the problem that arises if, as happens in language-orientated philosophy today, reference is discounted in favour of intralinguistic immanence. Apparently, intra-linguistic talk can render all the information needed for defensible philosophical discourse. Reference is indeed granted, but relegated to oblivion, if only to avoid paradox. Hegel's solution, so we might say, stands between modern phenomenology and language-orientated philosophy, in that he opts for reference *and* immanence. According to his approach, the mind's reference to being can be discussed, this side of being, only in thought. We seem to remain entrenched on the side of the mind and therefore isolated from any referent of mental acts. However, for Hegel, we can accommodate reference in a notion of thought such that reference to being is already a constitutive feature of its being thought. Restriction to the conceptual or categorial level will work, but only if concepts are taken dialectically. This position, however, is not available to language-orientated philosophy; this philosophy cannot theorize about the relationship of language and the world on pain of paradox (of which paradox Wittgenstein's map theory in the *Tractatus* is an early statement). The dialectical approach will always be superior where questions of comprehensibility, i.e. transcendental or speculative questions, are asked. Answers to such questions can, as in the case of the problem of reference, be provided to the extent that the question is couched in categorial, and this means, for Hegel, dialectical and systemic, terms.

The present plea for a categorial and systemic view of Hegel's philosophy is not new; it has an exponent in R. Kroner, who gave a systemic analysis of the *Logic* and of the relation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Logic* in his incomparable *Von Kant bis Hegel*. Similarly, other scholars have been aware of Hegel's systemic and foundational project.⁶ However, the emphasis of systemic analysts is often rather different from ours: granting Hegel's intentions and presumptions, they wonder whether his theory does not suffer from facile solution to problems requiring for their solution an anchorage in irreducible, intuitive, finite or, if we like, Kantian, stances, however conjoined with Hegelian devices. We cannot here enter into this area of criticism;⁷ all we can say here is that Hegel's philosophy, as a pure categorial theory – categorizing and 'placing' even irreducibles such as intuition and the finite ego – has the advantage purity carries with it: no elements of picturing (*Vorstellung*) of how knowledge comes about are necessary. The price is, of course, circularity in the

reconstruction of what is granted. But reason is only satisfied if it can accept things on its own terms, within the immanence of thought. Categories are the vehicle of such satisfaction, since they do not pretend knowledge of existences or individual items, which knowledge would have to be knowledge as to how such existences affect or fail to affect the validity of knowledge – an impossibility. Hegel does not 'know' more than Kant when he 'places' the thing-in-itself in a hermeneutical context while Kant denies knowing anything about it and yet talks about it. There need be no anchorage in existences by-passing categorization or understanding, in order to make ontology possible. Or, there need be no metaphysics; and if we are correct, there is a defensible reading of Hegel's philosophy as a non-metaphysical philosophy.

V Problems

Turning now to difficulties, we have to distinguish those incurred by Hegel in view of his categorial and systemic stance (if, that is, we are correct in imputing this to him) and those incurred by us when we see Hegel from this angle. Let us take the first set of problems first.

It may be argued, as, for example, the later Schelling did and, in our time, E. Gilson (in *Existence and Some Philosophers*), that existence is misconstrued if it is treated in Hegelian fashion. If Schelling extended his speculative craving for an account of what is to the problem of why something exists, and, in answer to this desire to know, introduced a surd, or God, as an existential principle, Gilson is similarly dissatisfied with the Hegelian position because it does not provide for an existential ground as *a* being. Or, Schelling and Gilson are concerned about the fate of metaphysics in the sense of a discipline making existential statements or, what comes to the same thing, in the sense of special metaphysics.

This problem has already been discussed in connection with neo-Kantian system analysis protesting against Hegel. To repeat what was said in a somewhat different context: one may have metaphysical cravings, and these are not ruled out by Hegel. Only, on our view, Hegel's philosophy does not commit one to having them. His position on God and religion, for example, is one that 'places' God and the religious congregation; it offers as their categorial account that unity of spirit which, as absolute, is not subject to plural (external, indifferent) instantiation and thus transcends the real. The ontologist need not claim that God exists apart from the congregation forming a unity with him. The category would be sufficiently instanced by 'religion', a concrete universal leading up to, and surpassed by, philosophy. The solution, subtle though it is, is non-committal metaphysically, if not misread in the fashion of picturing (or *Vorstellung*), which asks for an existence apart from thought.

More important may be an appraisal of Hegel's most concrete 'real' category or concrete universal, that of the state. The problems are well known: Hegel opts for a state of 'estates', for constitutional monarchy, against democracy in any real sense, against separation of powers etc. Is all this justified categorically, or is it the miscarriage of categorial thought, exposing it as a failure? Is Hegel's account a consequence, or a function, of his categorial and systemic orientation so that this is what makes a difference to what we are used to grant when we speak about the state?

The problem can be tackled in this way: the fault of Hegel's may be not so much that his is categorial thought, but that he makes concessions to existential considerations. In a purely categorial scheme, one would expect logically related accounts of society and the state, the one motivating a move to the other. Or the state would be shown to solve the problems of society (divisiveness and atomization). But Hegel wants to discuss also the real relationship society bears to the state: he connects societal classes (or 'estates') with political bodies (or 'estates'), thus creating existential bonds between society and the state. This move is understandable, in the sense of 'forgivable', in view of historical precedent and even language, but cannot be defended in theory. The state of 'estates' is a consequence of concessions, within a categorial scheme, to non-categorial matters. If we thought these flaws away, the account of the state would be more abstract, but also more correct.

And yet, we see a serious problem in the area of society and the state, or in a concrete plural real, precisely if the flaws of Hegel's theory are removed: the coexistence of entities of various categorizations – family, society, corporation, the state – cannot be grasped, except illegitimately, as the example of the 'estates' shows. Once Hegel moves to the next category, the previous one has been left behind. We are also conceptually interested in such an appraisal of concreteness – let us call it the state, which is what it is – in view of coexistent entities within it and of coexisting entities without it. Another example of this problem is Hegel's account of the state in external relationships. The consideration of this predicament leads him to introduce the military as a necessity. This may be perfectly sound, but, as a consequence of the sequential scheme of categories, the relationship of the state and the military, their subordination or non-subordination under civilian authorities, cannot be discussed, because that topic has been relinquished by the time Hegel comes to the military. Thus, concrete circumstances cannot be considered as making a difference to the thing categorized, and that failure to make a difference precisely makes a difference to the thing categorized. Also, Hegel imposes a restriction: states commune only on state level, irrespective of whatever other interrelationships – for example, intersocietal and society-state relations – may make the state what it is.

To put things more generally: the problem of Hegel's categorial scheme

is the linearity of exposition or reconstruction in plural realms. Categories of the social realm – where plurality matters in as much as such categories stand for plural entities and in as much as entities of diverse categorization coexist, such as families, society, and corporations in a state – seem to turn out differently from what we are used to grant because of the linear arrangement. At least this seems to be the case with the terminal category, that of the state. This is to that extent a ‘function’ of that arrangement. (The problem in Hegel, so it emerges, is exactly the opposite of the one exercising Bradley, that of internal relations. There is too little allowance for them in Hegel.) We should not say that the terminal category – that of the state – is vitiated by this arrangement: it is not a function of the abstraction and untruth of its antecedents (the sequence leads to an affirmative conclusion), and yet, conclusions as to its legitimate content have to be revised in the light of concreteness. We need the categories that can be set up the Hegelian way, but at the same time we realize the shortcomings of the procedure used. The problem is clearly not identical with Findlay’s problem when he objects to the ‘single line of reasoning’, and yet it has to do with linearity. In a similar way, the linearity problem makes itself felt in derivatives of Hegel’s philosophy such as Marx’s *Capital*, in which the sequential scheme, placed at the service of a critique, does seem to vitiate the result as one due to the abstraction of the antecedents, or in Sartre’s *Critique de la raison dialectique*, in which, again, the same conclusion may be drawn.⁸ The issue is too complex to be adequately dealt with here; but it is important to realize that we may have here a touchstone for determining the limitations of the Hegelian scheme and the systemic requirements for any theory promising to be more successful than his. Analysis of the problem might afford an insight into what speculative or transcendental theory can or cannot do. It is true that the difficulty pointed out for Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* does not seem to affect the programme of the *Logic*; it attaches to the extension of the method of the *Logic* to ‘Realphilosophie’, or to the social domain. (We may be spared here a comment on the philosophy of nature from this angle.)

VI Problems continued

Turning now to difficulties incurred by us if we view Hegel in the categorical and systemic manner, the main problem is that of misrepresentation. Are we not doing Hegel an injustice by presenting him as a categorical philosopher? On our view, are we not losing sight of the richness of Hegel, which includes metaphysics? In order to see clearly in this issue, let us take up one representative problem, that of history. Is not Hegel’s stand on history ample proof that all we seem to be doing is picking out

certain palatable bits from his philosophy at the expense of the concrete whole?

Hegel is often regarded as a thinker who gave history its due to a point where the distinction between systematic thought and historical thought collapses. This somewhat popular notion can be disputed even if our categorial and systemic interpretation is not adopted. An appeal to inspection is all that will be needed: the *Logic* simply is not historical thought; it is systematic thought, and so is the *Encyclopaedia*. However, in the philosophy of spirit, and in its close-up, the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel gives detail, or illustrates from detail, that is historical. Thus he reconstructs a state that fits the description of the Prussian state, or a religion that fits the Protestantism of his day. Hegel thinks that a fully fledged philosophy is only possible in a developed period, and such a philosophy accordingly grants these developments and reconstructs their results. In this sense, philosophy is 'its own time apprehended in thoughts' (*Philosophy of Right*, ed. and tr. by T. M. Knox, Preface, p. 11). In this same sense, philosophy is a late-comer, rationalizing what it finds, hoping to have before it an entelechy of concrete development. Philosophy cannot predict, nor can a philosophy reconstructive of an entelechy present to it be extended to cover, or usher in, future developments (as the Young Hegelians believed). The Hegelian consequence would rather be that if there is occasion to assume that things have changed significantly, then a new philosophy, a new reconstruction, would be called for. This seems to be the meaning of Hegel's sayings about putting up with the present ('hic Rhodus, hic saltus'), about the 'owl of Minerva', and about philosophy's being 'its own time apprehended in thoughts'. Philosophy is historical in that it reconstructs a richness that is historical, and it is historical in that it is transient, provided that history changes so as to demand a new philosophy. And yet, in all this, philosophy is systematic.

Hegel has, in addition, devised a *Philosophy of History* and introduced history in a constitutive function in his lecture courses on *Aesthetics* and on *Religion*. The problem attending our view of Hegel is whether or not these treatments of history square with Hegel's systematic philosophy, or whether or not we are wrong in making such a distinction. In this case, our categorial and systemic outlook is prescriptive and bids us draw a line: in order to show that history had to be the way it was so as to produce an entelechy permitting of systematic reconstruction, we need more than systematic philosophy. We need an extension of the dialectic to existence and contingency (for example, the divine incarnation).⁹ On our view, this 'maximal' claim of Hegel's philosophy is not defensible. But since Hegel, at least in certain works, makes it, the corresponding 'maximal' interpretation of his philosophy is defensible. One should realize, however, that as an overall interpretation, it involves an encumbrance. With our categorial and systemic interpretation, we feel we have

to discriminate between the various levels Hegel meant to encompass – that of world history and divine revelation, on the one hand, and that of a fully developed civilization capable of systematic treatment, on the other. We feel free to single out that systematic core of Hegel's philosophy which exhibits strictness. In that sense, the interpretation presented here can stand for a 'minimal' interpretation, or for a non-metaphysical interpretation, of Hegel. In its light, Hegel can be censured to the extent that he embraces history in the third of the three senses indicated or otherwise engages in metaphysics.

Conclusion

From the above, it appears that the categorial and systemic interpretation of Hegel can go a long way towards accommodating his philosophy, while, at the same time, it erects signposts where trespassing into metaphysics can be seen to be such. Conversely, the present interpretation can claim Hegel's philosophy as a possession for philosophy, as something that has come to stay, but for metaphysical extensions. In ontology in a narrower sense, in that of the *Logic*, Hegel's thought can be assessed as strict and indispensable; in fact, on the present interpretation, Hegel's claim appears, contrary to a metaphysical interpretation of his philosophy, as a very modest one. His achievement is seen to lie in a hermeneutic of categories. Admittedly, such a pursuit is a luxury of philosophy. In the concrete domain of ontology, in the philosophy of spirit, Hegel's thought appears as equally fruitful and indispensable, and yet as subject to criticism, not in terms of insufficient strictness, but of deficiencies that may be inherent in the speculative or transcendental method as such. Still, it may well be worth the effort to explore the questions of foundational philosophy in general in the light of a categorial and systemic reading of Hegel and to apply insights from such reading to concrete problem areas that without them must be relinquished to uncomprehending positivism. A study of Hegel along the lines proposed can reopen discussion and offer solutions in the theory of theory construction not surmised by those who read Hegel metaphysically or who too easily discount his theoretical rigour.

Notes

1 See op. cit., pp. 23f., 79; *Values and Intentions* (London and New York, 1961), pp. 25, 32, 44, 55, 106, 422; *The Discipline of the Cave* (London and New York, 1966), pp. 14, 76, 81. [But see Findlay's restatement in *Language, Mind*

and Value, reprinted in this volume – Editor] (not reprinted in this collection. R.S.).

2 Hegel seems to have used the latter term only for part of the concepts perused, those of 'objective' logic. See *Propaedeutic*, Third Course, Part I, §1. Cf. *ibid.*, Second Course, Part II, §6.

3 As in the case of the term 'category', Hegel seems to have reserved the term 'ontology' to the first and second ('objective') parts of the *Logic*. See *Propaedeutic*, Third Course, Part II, §15. *Science of Logic*, tr. by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (London and New York, 1961), p. 75.

4 *Hegel: A Re-examination*, p. 81.

5 See *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. and tr. by L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (New York, 1967), pp. 52, 62.

6 See H. Wagner, *Philosophie und Reflexion* (Munich, 1959). See also W. Flach, *Negation und Andersheit* (Munich, 1959), and D. Henrich *et al.* in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft No. 1 (Bonn, 1964). We may give pride of place to Feuerbach's article titled 'Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie' of 1839. *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart, 1959), II, pp. 158–204 [reprinted in Volume I, pp. 100–30. R.S.].

7 A worked-out philosophy on the lines of such criticism is available in the writings of R. Hönigswald and, latterly, in those of W. Cramer.

8 See the author's *Die Marxsche Theorie* (Berlin, 1970) and *Sartres Sozialphilosophie* (Berlin and Evanston, Ill., 1966).

9 An interpretation including this latter stance among Hegel's aims is that of K. Löwith (in *From Hegel to Nietzsche*). Lately, E. Fackenheim (in *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*) has proposed a similar view.

Understanding Hegel today

William Maker

Can there be any justification for studying Hegel today? Or is Marx's comment on Hegel – that he had come to suffer the fate even in his own country of being treated as a 'dead dog' – as appropriate for our times and our philosophical atmosphere as it was thirty years after Hegel's death?¹ Certainly Hegel scholars have found little or no need to raise or answer this question.² Where it is cultivated, Hegel scholarship blossoms in an environment where the study of the history of philosophy is regarded as an end in itself, with no need for further justification. Looking at the question from a different perspective, those outside of the narrow confines of Hegel studies could perhaps find grounds for looking at Hegel analogous to those which brought Carnap to read and analyse Heidegger: as a paramount example of what *not* to do in philosophy.³

I would like to suggest possible grounds for an interest in Hegel other than those rooted in historical-philosophical curiosity on the one hand or those motivated out of a desire to avoid the erroneous excesses of the past on the other. What I would like to offer is the unusual suggestion that Hegel has formulated certain arguments – specifically along the lines of a critique of metaphysics and absolutism in philosophy – which can and should be of interest to philosophers today. My contention is that Hegel has been largely misread by his students and misunderstood or ignored altogether by other philosophers who share certain common interests or themes with him. I say this because I firmly believe that the core and key of his philosophical project are grounded in a thorough-going and decisive critique of metaphysics (to be found in his first work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, hereafter, *PhG*); further, that this critique has never been made visible in the numerous interpretations of this work which are to be found in the literature, and that as a consequence his subsequent post-critical writings (to be found in the *Science of Logic*, hereafter, *WL*, and in the system as presented in the *Encyclopaedia*)

have been consistently – if quite understandably – *misread* as works expounding a powerfully absolutist metaphysics of the idealist sort.⁴

In what follows I shall be concerned chiefly with illuminating the *PhG* as Hegel's attempt at an immanent critique of absolute metaphysics, and I shall deal only briefly with the radically altered understanding of the *WL* and the system which this new reading of the *PhG* demands. (Needless to say, I believe that my reading of the *PhG*, although it takes issue with the received view of that work, is well grounded in the text itself, for this reading dispels certain troublesome difficulties in Hegel scholarship: specifically, the problem of providing an interpretation of the *PhG*, which accords with Hegel's own self-understanding of it.⁵ As my aim, however, is to argue for the reading of Hegel outside of or in addition to an interest in Hegel studies, I shall not dwell here on that aspect of the reading.)

The remainder of the paper will be divided into three sections corresponding to the three major areas of Hegel's philosophical project:

- I The immanent critique of metaphysics as an introduction to philosophical science: the *PhG* of 1807.
- II Philosophical logic as the domain of pure thought categories: the *WL* and the logic of the *Encyclopaedia*.
- III Real philosophy as the consideration in thought of what is other than thought: the second and third volumes of the *Encyclopaedia*: the philosophies of nature and of spirit.

I Phenomenology as the immanent critique of metaphysics

The *PhG* is generally understood to constitute Hegel's attempt at a deduction of an absolute, self-grounding standpoint of absolute thinking – 'absolute knowing' as found in the last chapter of the *PhG* – and, as this deduction, thereby to function as the alleged 'introduction' to his philosophical science.⁶ That is to say: 'Absolute Knowing', while ordinarily sceptically received, is none the less interpreted to be Hegel's *claim* to have attained to a fully self-grounded structure or principle of knowing – the self-reflecting structure of absolute self-consciousness – from out of which the categories of all thought and reality are subsequently generated, their unquestioned validity having been allegedly established in and by the *PhG* as the deduction and justification of this structure or principle. What I wish to contend is that the *PhG* functions as the introduction to science for Hegel in its being an *immanent critique* of just this absolute metaphysical standpoint and project which has come to be identified with Hegel. My claim is that correctly understood, the *PhG* is seen to function as an immanent critique of the very notion that it is possible in philosophy

to attain to such an absolute standpoint from out of which the absolute presuppositions concerning knowing and reality can be generated.

How does the *PhG* come to be constituted by Hegel as the critique of such an endeavour? The answer to this question and the clue to the *PhG* as the critique of this project – the project which takes as its task the establishment of an absolute self-grounding philosophical standpoint – are to be found in the Introduction to the *PhG*, where Hegel sets forth the project and method of that work, and in the opening sections of the *WL*, where he elucidates the role of the *PhG* as the introduction to the *WL*. For Hegel, the premier problem in philosophy concerns its beginning, for, unlike the positive sciences, philosophy aims to attain an absolute or presuppositionless grounding for itself, an absolute or unconditioned beginning point.⁷ Philosophers are concerned not merely with truths, but at a more fundamental level with the nature of truth itself, with what truth as such is and with the possibility of our attaining knowledge of it. If philosophy's self-assigned task is to establish the nature of truth and preconditions of valid knowing, then the chief problem it must confront concerns how it is to go about doing this. According to Hegel, it is a 'natural assumption' in philosophy that the proper way of establishing the nature of truth, the proper way of beginning, lies in an investigation of cognition.⁸ This way of beginning – this way of introducing science – seems legitimate, he tells us, for if we are to engage in the actual and true knowing of what is – if we are to do science – then it appears right that we should *first* investigate knowing *as such* (the faculty or instrument of cognition which makes it possible to know truly), thereby establishing the conditions for true and false knowing so that we can at last go about the business of actual knowing with full confidence concerning what we are about.⁹

It is Hegel's consideration of the difficulties inherent in this hypothesis concerning how philosophy should begin which will lead him to posit the carrying out of an 'investigation of cognition' as the topic of the *PhG*. The 'project' which we as phenomenologists will consider or observe will consist in the attempt to demonstrate the unconditional validity – the rigorously scientific character – of that structure or pre-understanding of knowing which is entailed by the natural assumption in so far as it demands an investigation of cognition or knowing as such as the proper method for introducing philosophical science. For to investigate knowing as such means adopting a fundamental understanding of what the structure of knowing consists in. (It is this pre-understanding of what knowing is which Hegel felt had never hitherto been exposed to critical philosophical examination). It requires us to assume, according to Hegel, that knowing consists in the *knowing of* an object (*Gegenstand*) which falls outside of the knowing of it, and that *true* knowing consists in the approximation or correspondence of the knowledge of the object with

the object as it is in itself. (Only if 'knowing' consists in the knowing of an object – whether the object be ideal or real – can the faculty or capacity of knowing as such be investigated or examined prior to engaging in actual cognition.) It is the philosophical validity of this natural assumption concerning knowing which Hegel, and we, consider in the *PhG*. It is made the object of our phenomenological consideration in that we observe the attempt on the part of a knower who embodies or is this structure of knowing – consciousness – to attain to the standpoint of discovering and articulating that mode of its relation to the object which fulfils the demand of the approximation or correspondence of knowledge and object. Thus we, as phenomenologists, do not merely, or directly, consider knowing. We are engaged in a second-level or phenomenological observation of consciousness' attempt to complete a self-grounding of its mode of knowing through a critical self-examination.¹⁰ What is at stake is whether or not the structure of knowing embodied by consciousness and defined by the natural assumption can bring itself to a self-accounting of this structure of knowing – thereby establishing its paradigmatic character as scientific – through attaining to that mode of its relation to the object which this structure implicitly postulates as constitutive of true knowing.

How is it that this phenomenological consideration of an investigation by consciousness of its knowing comes to be formulated by Hegel as constituting his introduction to science? (How the outcome of the investigation explicitly functions as this introduction I shall consider below.) The answer to the prior question is to be found in the reflections by Hegel, in the Introduction, which lead up to his positing of this project of consciousness as the topic of his phenomenology. These reflections concern a general difficulty which Hegel finds in the idea of an 'introduction to science'. And although this difficulty renders the idea of an investigation of cognition highly problematic, the initial alternative which comes to mind is even more unpalatable to Hegel, and leads him to the project sketched out above.

The general problem of an introduction to science, the problem of how one is to begin in philosophy, lies according to Hegel in the fact that every attempt to determine the nature of science, to 'introduce' it, to establish the conditions of true knowing, must seemingly itself make the claim to *already be* of the status of science, to *already be* true knowing.¹¹ For must not that knowing, or that discourse, in which we establish, discover or deduce the conditions for true knowing already itself be true? If it is not itself true knowing or true discourse, what guarantee do we have that the conditions for knowing which it presents are truly the true ones? (In Hegel's words: 'To investigate the faculty of knowing means to know it. The demand is thus this: one should know the faculty of knowing, before one knows; it is the same as wanting to swim before

one goes in the water.')¹² The project of an investigation of cognition as called for by the natural assumption 'seems legitimate', but its possible success also seems to require that it presuppose that which it wishes to establish first. If, as the natural assumption holds, knowing is in need of an investigation, is not that knowing which *investigates* knowing, the knowing which claims to know knowing, just as much in need of an investigation? And further: does not the very investigation – whose aim is to establish the preconditions, the *absolute* presuppositions concerning all knowing (which, as such, are thus not truly any 'presuppositions' at all) – does not the very possibility of such an investigation require the presupposing of several determinate things concerning the nature of knowing? That knowing can be made an object of itself, that something called 'knowing as such' can be distinguished from the objects of knowledge which are known in it?¹³ And finally and most troublesome of all, must not the carrying out of the investigation of cognition demand that the investigative knowing be pre-supposed as true? The problem of beginning in philosophy – or of introducing science – is that we must seemingly establish our beginning point before we can begin, or that we must already be able to know truly in order to be able to engage meaningfully in the philosophical task of first determining what true knowing, science, is.

For Hegel, the dilemma is that all claims to science – including that philosophical science which purports to establish the conditions for science – must appear before they can establish themselves to be of the status of science, and that this appearing, especially in the case of that philosophical endeavour which would first determine the nature of science itself, already constitutes a claim to be science.¹⁴

What is to be done? Hegel suggests that 'we could reject' the idea of an investigation and all that it entails. And 'we *could*, with better justification, simply spare ourselves the trouble of paying any attention whatever to such ideas and locutions; for they are intended to ward off Science itself, and constitute merely an empty appearance of knowing, which vanishes immediately as soon as Science itself comes on the scene' (my italics).¹⁵ This, however, would only lead us deeper into that problem which the phenomenology of knowing is finally designed to avoid. 'But science, just because it comes on the scene, is itself an appearance: in coming on the scene it is not yet science in its developed and unfolded truth.' To attempt to avoid an investigation of cognition, because of the problems it entails, would not solve the difficulty that any claim to science, in its appearing, stands in need of a justification of its claim to be science. 'In this connection it makes no difference whether we think of Science as the appearance because it comes on the scene alongside another mode of knowledge, or whether we call that other untrue knowledge its manifestation.'¹⁶ Either to engage in the investigation of cognition

or simply to 'do' science both fail to deal with the fundamental difficulty of the appearing character of science, with the necessarily problematic character of philosophical claims concerning true science.

According to Hegel, this difficulty must be confronted straightaway: 'Science must liberate itself from this semblance, and it can do so only by turning against it.'¹⁷ For him, this consists in making the appearing character of science – the confrontation of knowledge with its own problematic status – the object of a phenomenological consideration. For in such a consideration, as Hegel makes clear later on in the Introduction, the making and testing of claims to science are not undertaken by the phenomenologists, but rather by consciousness. The philosopher's dilemma of having to assert the possession of the true mode of knowing in order to address the topic of true knowing meaningfully is, according to Hegel, in this way at least provisionally avoided. 'It is for this reason that an exposition of how knowledge makes its appearance will here be undertaken.'¹⁸

Since the idea of a direct investigation of cognition appears dubious, and further since the seeming alternative – simply to begin with or engage in science immediately – constitutes the unfounded 'bare assurance' that one already possesses the true, scientific mode of knowing, we, as phenomenologists, shall consider knowing as it appears or presents itself, knowing as a phenomenon.¹⁹ The knowing which we shall observe will be the knowing embodied or defined by the structure of consciousness (where knowing is defined as the knowing of an object), and it shall constitute itself as our object through its attempts to demonstrate the truth, the scientific character, of its knowing. Because our object, consciousness, will undertake the making and testing of claims concerning true knowing, we will be observing knowing as it is engaged in the process of an attempt at self-grounding. What we will be describing as phenomenologists are various attempts on the part of knowing to confront its merely apparent status as true knowing. Each mode of knowing we consider – each 'shape of consciousness' – will be striving to validate its claim to be the scientific mode of knowing through demonstrating that it can provide access to the truth. Because appearing knowing as our object is thus constituted as self-critical, and as engaged in a project of self-criticism whose objective is to establish its unconditional validity in a rigorous way, we phenomenologists will be excused from the necessity of ourselves making 'bare assurances' concerning the nature of science.²⁰

I will now turn to the question of how this phenomenological consideration of knowing and the problem of an introduction to science can be seen to function as the introduction to Hegel's science. If the problem that leads to the *PhG* lies in the insight that an 'introduction' to science must seemingly *presuppose* that which it is designed to introduce just in order for this introduction to succeed, how then can the *PhG* be an

introduction to science? This interpretative problem, the problem of how the *PhG* can be understood as the introduction to science or as the 'deduction' of the 'Concept of Science', is at least initially intensified when we take into account the following remarks of Hegel's from the opening sections of the *WL*, remarks which show that his rejection of the traditional idea of an introduction to science – considered above – is not abandoned by him in the *WL*. Having informed us that it is 'the nature of cognition simply as such which is considered *within* the science of logic' (my italics), he goes on to write: 'But to want the nature of cognition clarified *prior* to the science is to demand that it be considered *outside* the science; *outside* the science this cannot be accomplished, at least not in a scientific manner and such a manner is alone here in place.'²¹ This remark, taken in conjunction with the following, makes it clear that the traditional understanding concerning how Hegel meant the *PhG* to function as the introduction to his science is mistaken, although in what sense the *PhG* does function as introduction is not yet clear. 'Logic, on the contrary' – that is as contrasted with the positive sciences – 'cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection and laws of thinking for these constitute part of its own content and have first to be established within the science. But not only the account of scientific method, but even the Concept itself of the science as such belongs to its content, and in fact constitutes the final result; what logic is cannot be stated beforehand, rather does the knowledge of what it is first emerge as the final outcome and consummation of the whole experience . . . the Concept of logic has its genesis in the course of the exposition and cannot therefore be premised.'²²

The clue to understanding how the *PhG*, as a phenomenological consideration of the carrying out by consciousness of a self-investigation of cognition, can function as the introduction to *Hegel's* science lies in seeing what is demanded if consciousness' project of self-grounding, consciousness' attempt to show that its mode of knowing is unconditionally valid and hence definitive of scientific cognition, is to succeed.

Consciousness, simply in being consciousness, in being an 'awareness of' something other than itself, implicitly and automatically defines true knowing as the correspondence, the identity in difference, of its knowledge of the object with the object as it is 'in-itself' outside of the knowing of it. Just thereby, consciousness can be regarded as manifesting a claim to science. But for consciousness to establish the legitimacy of this claim, it must not merely assert the truth of its mode of knowing. Rather, it must show that the structure of knowing which it defines is valid through coming to show that it can attain knowledge of the object as it is in-itself. That is to say, consciousness must come to *know* its *knowing* of the object as true. It is consciousness' attempt to attain to this knowing of true knowing which constitutes the dialectic of the *PhG* and which

ultimately leads to 'Absolute Knowing' (chapter 8 of the *PhG*) as the completion of its project of self-grounding.²³

The dialectic which leads to Absolute Knowing emerges in the following way. Each shape of consciousness begins with an idea concerning what the object in itself, the truth, is. Consciousness must then come to know the in-itself as just what it takes it to be. But in making an attempt at *this* knowing, in testing its knowledge, what consciousness finally comes to have or know as its object does not, short of Absolute Knowing, correspond to its original notion of the in-itself. After each testing, what consciousness comes to know (as the now 'true' notion of the in-itself which inaugurates the next shape of consciousness) is its *knowledge of* the object. That which consciousness attains to as the result of attempting *to know* its knowledge (its original notion of the in-itself) as true is the discovery of its *knowledge of* this in-itself as the true in-itself. By making its idea of the in-itself into an object of knowledge in order to test it, consciousness comes to discover not the in-itself as originally posited, but its knowledge of this in-itself, as true (or as the *new* idea of the in-itself which must subsequently be tested).²⁴

This immanent and self-critical dialectic continues until consciousness comes to posit as the in-itself nothing but its own *structure of knowing*. In this case – in Absolute Knowing – the ultimate identity in difference demanded by consciousness' fundamental pre-understanding of what true knowing is, is achieved. For, when consciousness takes its own knowing as the object, the *knowledge of* this object and this object as it is in-itself are one and the same. In Absolute Knowing, the object in-itself, as consciousness' own structure of knowing, consists in the being-for-consciousness of its knowing – the being for consciousness *of* being for consciousness, or the pure knowing of pure knowing. And so also, the knowing *of* this object is the being for consciousness of 'being for consciousness'. Thus identity as well as difference of knowledge and object are at once simultaneously constituted, for difference in identity marks the relation of knowing *to* the object when the object is knowing itself, just as difference in identity constitutes the in-itselfness of the object. (There is difference in both cases, simply because what is occurring is – both within the object in its in-itselfness, and in the knowing of it – a *knowing of*. And yet this very differentiating is at once the attaining to identity of knowledge and object because that which is known in the object, as well as that which knows it, are both nothing but knowing.)²⁵

It is my contention that the *PhG* consists in a consideration by Hegel (and by ourselves as fellow phenomenologists) of the attempt to attain to this absolute, *self-grounding* and *self-legitimizing* (and hence presuppositionless) knowing. It must now be explained how the *PhG*, as a consideration of the search for such and Absolute Knowing, functions both as an

immanent critique of absolute metaphysics and *thereby* as an introduction to Hegel's science.

In phenomenologically considering the quest for Absolute Knowing the *PhG* considers the possibility of absolute metaphysics just because the search for absolute, unconditioned and presuppositionless knowing – the search for *episteme* in the radical sense – is the search for an absolute standpoint or an absolute principle of knowing from which, once attained to, the preconditions or presuppositions for all knowing and reality can be given. Such a state of affairs is – as we shall see, *provisionally* – attained to in Absolute Knowing in that at one and the same time the nature of true being, as object, and the nature of the knowing in which the truth of this being can be grasped, are unequivocally and mutually established. The conditions for the possibility of objects of knowledge and for knowledge of objects are at one and the same time originally and reciprocally self-given.²⁶

We have seen how consciousness, through its attempt to demonstrate the unconditionally scientific character of its mode of knowing, both demands and ultimately attains this Absolute Knowing. The *PhG* functions as Hegel's immanent critique of absolute metaphysics because in it this search for an absolute standpoint is carried out and because the conclusion in Absolute Knowing consists in the simultaneous success and failure, or success *in* failure, of this search. The immanently critical outcome arises because, as seen by Hegel and the phenomenological we, the very completion of the project, the attaining to Absolute Knowing, is at the same time the *self-transcendence* or self-elimination of this knowing as a knowing. The *PhG*'s culmination in Absolute Knowing consists in a critique of consciousness' project and of the knowing attained to in the sense that, as Hegel says already in the Introduction, what is attained to by consciousness as the concept of knowledge 'shows itself' to be merely 'unreal knowledge', or, as he says in the *WL*, absolute or pure knowing *as the deduced concept of science* 'ceases itself to be knowing'.²⁷ And this critique is immanent because the collapse or self-elimination of Absolute Knowing as a knowing is fully internal or self-engendered, that is it does not depend on Hegel's application of a standard of knowledge external to that being considered by consciousness.

How is it that consciousness' search for radical self-grounding as presented in the *PhG* completes itself in what I have called a 'success in failure', and how is it that such a culmination constitutes an immanent critique of the notion of absolute self-grounding knowing and absolute metaphysics? And further, how does this negative outcome of the *PhG* function for Hegel as the 'deduction of the Concept' of *his* science?

Consciousness' attempt to show that its structure of cognition is definitive of science succeeds in failure or fails in succeeding simply because in the coming of absolute, presuppositionless and fully self-grounded

knowing to actually be attained to, *no conditions for knowing are established*. In the coming of knowing to its pure self-grounding self-legitimation, no determinate principle or structure of knowing – which could then be taken up and applied in science, its validity having been demonstrated – is to be found. Genuinely absolute and presuppositionless knowing turns out, contrary to consciousness' anticipations and hope, to be – as Hegel indicates in the *WL* – *no knowing at all*. The project succeeds because Absolute Knowing is attained to; consciousness does come to a full self-grounding of itself as structure of knowing. But it fails in this very success just because, in Absolute Knowing, the fundamental pre-understanding of knowing which consciousness operated with, and which *defined* consciousness as a cognitive structure, eliminates itself in the moment of its absolute self-legitimation.

How is this so? Consciousness, in being what it is, defines itself and knowing as the *knowing of* an object, of something, whether ideal or real, whether given or constituted by consciousness, which is determinately distinguishable from that which is conscious or aware of it. But in Absolute Knowing, in which consciousness shows that it can attain to knowledge of the object as it is in itself through showing that its knowledge of the object is at once identical to it (and hence true) while yet different from it (and hence genuinely *knowledge of* this object in its objectivity) – in this Absolute Knowledge as the simultaneous identity in difference of knowledge and object, just this definitive difference which defines consciousness' mode of knowledge and which consciousness *is*, is eliminated. For in Absolute Knowing in its full-blown absoluteness, *nothing* is present which is not both at once identical to and different from both itself and its other. For pure knowing of pure knowing is simply this simultaneous identification in differentiation. In Absolute Knowing, once attained to, nothing is present which could be identified as being a knowing subject, over against an object of knowledge, or *vice versa*. (In Chapter 8 Hegel speaks of the elimination of this 'over-againstness' – what he calls the form of *Gegenständlichkeit* – as that which takes place in Absolute Knowing.²⁸)

Just in this – the always hitherto presupposed fixed difference between knowledge and object being eliminated – the pure knowing relation of absolute knowing, which *is* as the elimination of the fixed difference, comes to eliminate this difference as its ground and hence ultimately eliminates itself as a determinate relation. In that the relata – knowing awareness and its object – are eliminated or rendered indistinguishable, the relation itself (absolute or pure knowing) in which they are dissolved dissolves itself as a relating, a structure, a determinate something. To put this state of affairs in more general terms: an absolute *self-grounding*, in which nothing is left as presupposed, assumed or ungrounded, demands that the ground and that which it grounds be one and the same. Thus,

the determinate difference between the ground and the grounded must be eliminated, but as eliminated, the whole self-grounding structure as something determinate, describable and applicable as a principle of cognition and being is also eliminated. According to Hegel, then, an absolute self-grounding philosophical standpoint is thinkable, but the very act of thinking it at once manifests its fundamentally aporetic character. To return to the specific context of Absolute Knowing in the *PhG*, that very knowing which constitutes the absolute grounding and legitimization of consciousness as principle of cognition turns out, according to consciousness' understanding of knowing, to be no knowing at all.

Hegel tells us that it is just this outcome of the self-sublation of Absolute Knowing which is taken up as the deduced concept of science and that starting point of the *WL*.²⁹ It is clear – and in agreement with Hegel's remarks concerning the beginning of logic quoted above – that this deduction yields no determinate principle or structure from out of which the logical categories could be generated by some derivative process which appeals to a given, externally justified rule or principle. Rather, what constitutes the concept of science with which logic begins is simply the utter indistinguishability of the terms, the indeterminateness of that principle of cognition brought to its self-grounding in the *PhG*. Hence, in Hegel's words the *WL*, just in beginning with that which results from the *PhG* and with nothing else, begins in and with 'the unanalysable', an 'undifferentiated unity'; that which 'cannot possess any determination relative to anything else' and which 'cannot contain within itself any determination, any content'; it is 'simple immediacy', 'pure indeterminateness', or 'completely empty being'.³⁰

This self-elimination of consciousness' structure of cognition in the moment of its attainment of an absolute self-grounding of itself is for Hegel a critique of what we today call metaphysics in the following way. If metaphysics generally is to be identified not with any particular thesis concerning reality and the nature of cognition (idealism, realism, empiricism and so on) but rather as the demand for (or simple assumption of) an absolute standpoint, regardless of the particular details and positive theses of it, then the *PhG* has shown that the attempt to ground any particular standpoint as absolute, the attempt to find and secure a *fundamentum inconcussum*, an absolute principle from out of which the conditions for all knowledge and reality can be determined, leads, in the very grounding of this standpoint, *eo ipso* to its transcendence. Put straightforwardly, the Hegelian critique of absolute metaphysics – anticipating Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* by over a century – is this: the attained to and absolutely grounded standpoint turns out to be no determinate standpoint at all; in being attained, it sublates itself, and from it nothing can be said.

At the same time, however, this critique of metaphysics does not

signify, for Hegel, the ultimate suicidal act of philosophy as a meaningful and unique endeavour. The coming to self-collapse or self-elimination of what according to Hegel is the natural assumption in philosophy – that 'knowing' can be unreflectively postulated as consisting in the *knowing* of an object – serves also to introduce Hegel's science. How is this?

First of all, it must be noted that this manner of introduction is a radically negative one. On the one hand, science is 'introduced' by the *PhG* because the immanent self-elimination of the natural assumption – that self-elimination which is *self-induced*, first of all because the knowing in which it is induced is demanded for the grounding of this knowing and second because the understanding of knowing violated in the grounding is just that knowing which is to be grounded – indicates that, contrary to this assumption (as set forth in the first paragraph of the Introduction to the *PhG*), science cannot be introduced in the sense of having its truth principle established prior to science by means of a preliminary investigation.³¹ On the other hand, the limited success of this self-grounding – the fact that consciousness' mode of knowing is actually brought to presuppositionlessness – *does* indicate what a presuppositionless science must begin with: not with a presupposed or predetermined method or principle, but with nothing save 'this pure indeterminateness' which results from the collapse of that structure of knowing presupposed as valid in its coming to demonstrate its presuppositionlessness. (In this sense, then, the idea of an 'investigation of cognition' as preliminary to science does turn out to be correct, but not at all in the manner expected.) As Hegel says in the *WL*, this science does not begin with any determinate principle or structure of knowing. Rather, it begins in and with that concept of science which is deduced by the *PhG*: absolute or pure knowing as the self-cessation of knowing into the indeterminate.³² In this way, science begins 'immediately' (as Hegel says) or without presuppositions in virtue of the *mediation* constituted by the self-sublating mediation of the *PhG*.³³ (And thus the beginning of science is *both* mediated and immediate: 'What philosophy begins with must be either *mediated* or *immediate*, and it is easy to show that it can be neither the one nor the other; thus either way of beginning is refuted.'³⁴ What is refuted, by the *PhG*, is the idea of a literally *absolute* beginning, either in the sense of one *fully* self-mediated or unconditionally immediate in the sense of being not mediated at all.)

The *PhG* thus 'introduces' science not by establishing any determinate preconditions, any methods or rules which determine the nature of science or its validity (all of these, Hegel says, must be the topic of science and can only be established within it),³⁵ but rather by showing that an absolute beginning, in the Hegelian sense, can have no predeterminations *save* for the demonstration, carried out by the *PhG*, that an attempt to absolutely ground the presuppositions or preconditions for knowing leads, in their

being grounded, not to their being fixed and firmly established but rather to their own elimination. (This is the sense in which I understand Hegel's claim that the beginning of science is *both* mediated and immediate, and his claim that the *WL* has the *PhG* for its presupposition while it none the less begins without presuppositions.³⁰)

Thus the *PhG* 'introduces' science precisely by showing that it can have no introduction in the ordinary sense, by showing that to begin in philosophy without presuppositions does not mean to begin with some allegedly absolutely grounded presupposition but literally with no presuppositions at all. (And what the latter means is indicated in the *PhG* in the coming of the natural assumption in Absolute Knowing to eliminate even its most basic presupposition concerning the nature of knowing, the fixed difference between knowledge and its object.) Thus for Hegel the beginning of presuppositionless science – the indication of just what presuppositionless qua knowing means (unanalysable relationless indeterminateness) – requires the prior mediation which consists in the systematic self-elimination of all presuppositions concerning knowing. This occurs in the *PhG* because the only knowing involved therein, the knowing characteristic both of consciousness and of the relation of the phenomenologists to consciousness, is knowing as defined by the natural assumption, that knowing which in its final self-legitimation eliminates itself. Thus, as described above, the *PhG* ends with no knowing. For consciousness eliminates itself as knower, and thus eliminates the phenomenologists' only object of knowledge, leaving only indeterminateness as the residue – an indeterminateness which cannot be taken up as an *object* of cognition, for the very legitimacy of presupposing that mode of knowing has shown itself to be aporetic.

II The *WL* as the domain of pure thought categories

According to Hegel, the *WL* begins in indeterminateness as the collapse of that structure of knowing presupposed in the natural assumption. The attempt to ground this structure (the subject-object structure which defines consciousness) as absolute and unconditioned, as *the* structure of knowing from which all philosophical considerations must proceed and to which they must return as definitive of the limits of all possible cognition, has led to its self-elimination. (Thus, the ideal of absolute metaphysics, that one can self-consistently and adequately establish the absolute principles and ineluctable limits of philosophical thought, is immanently unmasked as a false idol. For it has shown that reason, in the very act of reducing itself to a determinate graspable principle, must necessarily transcend just this principle. From this it follows that there can be no *absolute* principle of reason, no final demarcation of the 'limits'

of thought which does not at once, just through the act of setting these limits, transcend them. Thus, in Hegelian terms, reason is finite not because it has *absolute* limits, but because any valid demonstration of its [necessarily conditional] limits indicates that they are not absolute. Positively speaking, 'philosophy' thus emerges as an infinite task, but no longer in the sense of searching for an ideal of absolute final self-grounding which it can never attain. Thus the Hegelian critique of metaphysics is not one which terminates philosophy either through showing that it is 'impossible' or through claiming to establish *the* absolute philosophy which has presented 'the final solution to the problems'. This critique of metaphysics stands rather as the beginning of an attempt at philosophy emancipated from an illusory ideal of closure. *This* cure of the disease of metaphysics is not one which kills the patient at the same time.)

For Hegel, the self-cessation of Absolute Knowing as knowing indicates that philosophical science as presuppositionless must begin without any predeterminations either of its subject matter or of its method. (Form, or method, and content are one for Hegel in the *WL* because to attempt to distinguish them – that is to provide some rule or rules for the thinking of indeterminateness which constitutes the beginning of the *WL* – would be *once again* to presuppose the distinction of thought and its object as paradigmatic for the philosophical endeavour. Thus, in the *WL*, Hegel is not claiming that form and content are one because he has discovered the absolute method, but rather because in a philosophy which is attempting to be presuppositionless, there can be no pre-given method.)

What in the nature of this beginning point and in Hegel's consideration of it can be said to indicate the non-metaphysical character of the *WL*? Put differently: if the *PhG* is a critique of metaphysics as the critique of the attempt to make an absolute and presuppositionless beginning in philosophy, how can the *WL* not be a claim to metaphysics if it allegedly begins without presuppositions?

The clue to understanding the *WL* in its non-metaphysical character lies in taking seriously Hegel's claim that the *WL* has the *PhG* for its presupposition, for the *PhG* has shown neither that presuppositionless philosophy is impossible, nor that it is possible. (Were the *PhG* to be an introduction to presuppositionless science in the sense that it claimed to prove the possibility of, or claimed to determine or guarantee the method of the presuppositionless philosophy, such an introduction would clearly – and necessarily – fail to do what it is supposed to do. It is the mistake of understanding the *PhG* as being Hegel's claim to provide an introduction in this sense which has led to so many attacks on Hegel's idea of philosophy.)³⁷ What the *PhG* does, as the presupposition for presuppositionless science, is to show that such a science, if it is to be attempted at all, cannot be begun on the basis of any predeterminations of its method, character or range. To begin without presuppositions for Hegel

does not mean to begin with something absolutely grounded and determinate. It means to begin without presuppositions, and thus nothing can be presupposed here either in regard to method (the manner in which thought determinacies come to be determined) or content (what, if anything, these determinacies refer to or are the determinacies 'of'). (It is the necessity, and legitimacy, of always thinking of determinacy as the determinacy *of* something, be it either thought, the thinking subject, or being, the domain of objectivity, which has been suspended, not once and for all, but as the proper beginning point for philosophy, through the *PhG*.) This means among other things that the pure categories cannot *be* determined, in the process of constituting the logic, as though they were the categories of anything. To do pure philosophical logic in this manner would be to return to the model of thinking of objects as paradigmatic for thinking as such. Also, as determined, the system of logical categories (and given its traditional philosophical meaning, the term 'category' is clearly inappropriate here) cannot *eo ipso* be taken to refer to or stand for anything else. (The thesis of this logic is most definitely *not* that thought and being are identical such that through pure thought one can produce the categories of being as such. For the very idea that thought and being are one, are identical, is parasitical on the model of cognition which presupposes their initial difference. 'Indeterminateness' as the beginning point of this logic asserts neither that thought and being are identical nor that they are different; what it 'says' in effect is that neither this difference nor this identity can be presupposed in philosophy, that is that philosophy can begin neither as ontology nor as transcendental logic.) As the thinking of thinking, the task of logic is first to come to a full and immanent self-determination of the domain of thought, where 'thought' is initially a cypher which derives no determinacy from the traditional assumed contrast of thought and being. The idea here is *not* that one abstracts away from the concrete subject and the domain of concrete objectivities in order to get at the skeletal structure of their hidden truth, but that one must first suspend this whole model entirely, and just think, without any such objective in mind, if one is going to do pure philosophy, and if one is ever going to be able to address such issues (as is done in the *Encyclopaedia*) in something less – or more – than an *ad hoc* manner. Prior to attempting to engage in anything else – such as a consideration of reality and of the thinking subject – thought must set its own house in order, and in doing this, in engaging in its own self-determination, the question of the applicability or non-applicability of pure thought categories to something 'outside' of thought cannot be entered into. Which is another way of saying that the structure of consciousness, of our everyday human understanding, cannot be taken up as a model or paradigm in philosophy. Neither can it be assumed that the categories of logic are the categories 'of' or 'for' something 'outside' of

logic, or that the categories as they are here determined are determined in virtue of being objects for a thinking subject. The *WL* is not metaphysical, either in the ontological or transcendental sense, because its categories are not alleged to have – simply as the pure categories of logic – any descriptive or determinative reference beyond themselves. (It was just *that* philosophical problematic, and the problematic character of specifying and legitimating how thoughts can truly refer to and describe the objects lying beyond them, which was immanently considered, and abandoned, in the *PhG*.) The categories of the *WL* are ‘empty’, but precisely not in the sense in which logical categories are ordinarily held to be empty – because they require (and are philosophically constituted with this requirement in mind) – content or filling from outside of thought.³⁸ Rather, these pure logical categories are empty in that in their coming to be constituted they are purported to be nothing more than pure thought categories. The thinking of them makes no reference, and takes into account no possible reference, to anything ‘outside’ of thought, not because thought and reality or subject and object have come to be identified in some determinate manner (such that in thinking the categories of pure logic one thereby thinks the categories of the real), but because the philosophical predisposition (the ‘natural assumption’) to enter into or begin the philosophical endeavour with some preconception of what ‘thought’ on the one hand and ‘reality’ on the other are, and what the relation of the two is, has been bracketed. As it is the nature of thought which is *to be* determined in and through the pure process of a self-consideration of thought (a consideration whose purity is made possible but by no means guaranteed through the *PhG*’s demonstration that reducing thought to a determinate principle is self-defeating), what ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ of thought means here is undetermined or indeterminate at the beginning. Given over 150 years of interpreting Hegel as an absolute idealist and as a philosopher of identity, the fact that the *WL* begins not with the postulation of the identity of thought and being or subject and object, but rather with the thesis that no determinate relation of them can be presupposed in philosophy, cannot be overemphasized.

It was Hegel’s insight that if philosophy is to be pure and presuppositionless it must, in its initial self-constitution as presuppositionless science, give up all naive and assumed links to the ‘real’ world and to the thinking subject. Simply put, the *PhG* shows that these links, however ‘self-evident’ and ‘irreducibly primal’ in and for our ordinary, commonsensical existence, cannot be legitimately assumed as self-evident and primal *in philosophy*.³⁹ Such a ‘natural assumption’ – the *PhG* claims – reveals its own fundamentally distortive character when the attempt is made not simply to take this natural attitude as given, but to *philosophically justify* its unconditionality or absolute primordality (that is to transform, through a process of radical self-grounding, this ‘self-evidence’ and

'givenness' into something more than a claim or assertion). Such an attempt leads, ineluctably, not only to consciousness' progressive self-critical transformations (as a consequence of its attempts at once to transcend and yet not transcend – and thereby ground – itself), but further to its ultimate self-elimination. This self-elimination, however, is *philosophical* in character. It does not claim to be the elimination of consciousness *as such*, as though our ordinary conscious attitude were an illusion or error to be corrected by philosophy. Rather, it is the elimination of consciousness as an absolute, the elimination of consciousness as *the* (alleged) philosophical grounding principle.

Thus, to regard the *WL* as though it is a logic whose categories are either about reality or about the manner in which 'objective' reality is to be thought by the thinking subject is simply to return once again to what Hegel calls the 'natural assumption in philosophy', an assumption whose illegitimacy he has gone to great pains to unmask in the *PhG*. What these categories or thought determinacies *are* can only be shown or discovered in and through the process of their thought. (Strictly speaking, in and through the process of their generation which begins in the thinking of indeterminateness in its indeterminateness. This activity leads to the immanent generation of the categories in that the thinking of indeterminateness leads to the thinking of the disappearance of a contrast between the indeterminate and the determinate; in Hegel's terminology, it leads to *becoming*.) What these thought determinacies *are* can only be discovered in this way because, if this science is to be presuppositionless, and if there can be, on account of this presuppositionlessness, no separation of method and content, then there can be no external meta-principle or rule which can be abstracted to as a guide for telling us how the categories are constituted and what they are. Similarly, what these categories or thought determinacies *mean* – the answer to the question of what they are and what their significance for philosophy is if they are neither ontological nor transcendental categories – can only be raised and answered, as Hegel indicates, at the completion of the projection of their constitution, where the move from logic to real philosophy takes place. To raise these questions and to demand an answer prior to that point, prior to the consideration of *logical method* in which the *WL* culminates, would be to engage, from a Hegelian point of view and on the basis of the outcome of the *PhG*, in a category mistake.

The categories or logical determinacies of this logic are not *ontological* (the *WL* is not an onto-logic) first of all because there is no claim that as pure logical categories they are *about* the world. And second – and perhaps more importantly – because the determinacy and the validity of these categories does not *come to be determined* with the notion in mind that the categories being determined are *meant to be* the categories of reality. And third – and perhaps most importantly – because in the

constitution of these categories, in, initially, the thinking of indeterminacy in its indeterminateness, this indeterminateness is not *invested with* determinacy because it now stands as the object for a thinking subject. (That is to say, in the thinking of the logic, the natural assumption that whatever is determinate is at least minimally determinate and fixed in its determinacy as object because it stands over against a thinking subject is suspended.) The categories or logical determinacies of this logic are not *transcendental* (the *WL* is not a transcendental logic) first of all because there is no claim that as pure logical categories they are the thought categories of the actual thinking subject (whose thought categories are what they are because of the relation of the subject to a world of objects). And second – and perhaps more importantly – because the determinacy and validity of these categories does not *come to be determined* with the notion in mind that the categories being determined are *meant to be* the categories of the actual thinking subject. And third – and perhaps most importantly – because in the constitution of these categories the idea that they are determinate, or are constituted in their determinacy on the ground of a thinking, self-relating subject – a transcendental unity of apperception – which as given provides the foundational ground or model for their constitution, is suspended.⁴⁰ (The correctness of the second and third of these claims concerning both the non-ontological and non-transcendental character of the *WL* goes beyond the matter of Hegel's intentions, and can thus only be substantiated through an actual examination of the nature of the argument and development of the *WL*, something which clearly lies beyond the scope of this paper.)

To say that the *WL* is neither ontological nor transcendental, and in these senses is not metaphysical in character, is simply to say that the model of consciousness' manner of knowing objects is not adopted as the paradigm in terms of which logical categories are determined. Hegel will, of course, have something to say both about the world and about the thinking subject in its relation to the world. But he will say this only subsequent to the constitution of the *WL*, and the part which pure logical categories will play in this saying will not be that of consisting in an absolute, fixed system of *forms* which are applied to a content. (As though these categories could gain referential validity simply by being 'filled' with some concrete subject matter.) Nor will Hegel claim that the forms of logical determinacy are, as constituted, the forms of reality. It is not that philosophy as the pure self-consideration of thought can never come to say something about what is other than thought itself – as mentioned above, the Hegelian critique of metaphysics does not condemn philosophy to silence – but rather that prior to philosophy – as a non-metaphysical thinking activity – being able to speak about what is other than itself, other than thought, the domain of pure thinking must first engage in a self-clarification of pure thought determinacies. (In Hegel's mind, it is a

matter of first considering the inherent adequacy and inner consistency as such of notions such as 'ground/grounded', 'essence/appearance', 'contingency/necessity', 'identity/difference', 'subject/predicate', and so on, *before* taking up the question of their applicability. It is the question of their ultimate origins as determinate notions, their relation to other notions, and in these – and other senses – their truth *as such* as notions, ideas, thought determinacies, which must be first investigated. But – and it is crucial to note this – not as though such an investigation *per se*, or in and of itself alone, will, therefore guarantee their adequacy as applied.)⁴¹ It is a matter of first taking up the simple, and just because of its utter simplicity, enormously difficult question, What is determinacy? or, What is determinacy as thought? – keeping in mind that we can no longer, because of the *PhG*, simply assume that determinacy is determinate because it is either given to or constituted by a thinking subject. This must be undertaken prior to our thinking about determinacy or determinacies determined outside of the pure thinking process; that is determinacies whose determinacy does not derive solely in and through the thinking activity.

This means that the logical categories or determinacies found in the *WL* are the categories or determinacies of pure thought or thinking alone. The process of their generation, the determination of their determinacy, takes place without the coming into play of the notion that they 'stand for' some alleged 'real objects' and also without the notion that they are what they are in virtue of being the 'thought objects' for a thinking subject. The model of *Gegenständlichkeit* – the 'natural assumption' of the identity of *Objektivität* with *Gegenständlichkeit* which follows once one adopts the paradigm of the relation of the thinking subject to objects (*Gegenstände*) as paradigmatic for *all* thinking – has been suspended. (According to this paradigm, thought is held to derive its objectivity either because the categories of thought 'stand for' objects as they are *in re* or because they are *a priori* categories which make the knowledge and experience of objects possible. It is not so much that for Hegel this is not at all, or not in a qualified sense, the case, but rather that it is illegitimate to assume in philosophy that this model is absolutely paradigmatic, and that, as the *PhG* shows, the attempt to ground such an assumption requires the transcendence of the model for the grounding of its absolute character.)

Because the mediated presuppositionless beginning point of the *WL* (which is a presuppositionless beginning point in the sense that the natural assumption's presupposition concerning the nature of knowing has been suspended, but which is a mediated or qualified presuppositionlessness because the attaining to this presuppositionlessness requires that one begins, as in the *PhG*, with this presupposition in the first place) depends upon this collapse, the coming to be presupposed no longer of the subject/

object relation as paradigmatic, the logical categories of this work cannot *eo ipso*, without falling back into the natural assumption whose elimination, according to Hegel, makes the *WL* possible, be taken to refer to anything. (The very notion of reference of course presupposes just that distinction – between thought and its objects – which has come to be suspended.) The *WL* is thus neither a metaphysical ontology nor a metaphysical transcendental logic (it is universally interpreted to be either one of these or a curious hybrid of both), because its beginning point rests on the suspension as a philosophical paradigm of the very dichotomy which makes it meaningful to speak of ontologic or transcendental logic. The idea behind the *WL* is that before philosophy, before pure thinking, can begin to say anything about what is other than itself – before, that is, philosophy can say anything about ‘reality’ or its relation as thought to ‘reality’ – it must first clarify and determine the nature and range of pure thought as such. As so explicitly limited – and this is a limitation demanded by its beginning point, its concept of science as the collapse of Absolute Knowing – the *WL* is neither absolutist nor metaphysical; it has no extension beyond itself.

III Real philosophy

As we know, Hegel’s philosophical project does not end with logic as the self-determination and self-constitution of the domain of pure logical categories. There lies the whole of the system beyond the *WL*, beginning (in the *Encyclopaedia*) with a philosophy of nature and moving on from that into a consideration of the entire domain of the real. How is a non-metaphysical ‘real philosophy’ possible at all? That is, how can we move from a pure self-consideration of thought (a self-consideration which is pure not because it abstracts from reality but because it abstracts from the idea of a contrast between thought and reality, the idea which gives the traditional notion of thought abstraction its meaning) to a consideration in thought of the real without engaging right away in idealism? Where the real as such or *in re* is held to be essentially identical to thought (such that from out of thought alone the determinacies of reality as they are *in re* can be generated) or where it is held that the pure *a priori* categories of thought or of the understanding are determinative of reality in so far as we are capable of attaining knowledge of it (leaving reality *as such* as a necessary but utterly unintelligible residue)?

Do we have any indication that the real philosophy Hegel attempted to develop is not idealistic in either of these senses? (The former holding that pure thought as such can grasp reality as it is in-itself, the latter holding that the *a priori* categories of thought are constitutive of reality in so far as it is knowable by us all.)

The answer to this question needs to be linked to the actual beginning of Hegel's real philosophy in his philosophy of nature. And just as the completion of the *PhG* needed to be grasped in order to see the non-metaphysical character of the *WL*, so too the nature of the completion of the *WL* needs to be focused on in order to see the non-idealistic and non-metaphysical character of the philosophy of nature.

The beginning of the philosophy of nature involves a transition, in philosophical systematic thinking, from the logical domain, the domain of pure thought categories. The operative notion upon which this transition might be made intelligible as a non-metaphysical one lies in the idea – found in the *WL* itself – that the coming to completion in thought of the domain of pure thought categories requires in and of itself the coming to be considered in thought of the *idea* of a determinacy or range of determinacies which are other than pure thought determinacies. Which is to say that the completion of the process of the self-determination of pure thought necessitates a self-limitation of this domain – a self-limitation which comes to be constituted in so far as thought takes up the idea of that which is other than itself.⁴² If pure thought determinacies – the determinacies of the *WL* – can be characterized in general as thought determinacies which are determined in their determinacy solely in, through and by thought alone, then it appears that the completion of the endeavour of the logical consideration which constitutes them will both entail and lead to a consideration – once again, *in* and *by* thought, signifying that the transition is in thinking, in the 'Idea' itself – of the notion of a range or type of determinacies which do not derive or attain their determinacy *solely* in the manner in which logical determinacies are determined. (The process of the demarcation of the logical domain is at the same time the process of the self-limiting self-extension of systematic philosophical cognition.)

As a 'product' of the self-constitution of philosophical cognition, the philosophy of nature, as the first part of real philosophy, will be constituted in accordance with logic, with the concept; not, however, through taking the logical categories as 'forms' in and through which a given content is organized. Rather, the constitution of the determinacy of what is 'other than thought' takes place through the self-contrastive self-transformation of logical categories, through what Hegel calls the thinking of 'the Idea in the form of Otherness'.⁴³ In this sense then, though clearly a *philosophy* of nature – a thinking consideration of nature – this is not as such a metaphysics of nature, for the very foundation and beginning point of this philosophy of nature entails and is based upon the recognition in and by thought of the necessity of a domain of determinacies which come to be determined as they are independently of the manner in which pure thought determinacies were determined. (Thus, moving to real philosophy consists not merely in taking up a new topic, but also in

a transformation of the process or mode of thinking itself.) The transformational 'thesis' which guides the move into real philosophy is not that thought and reality are 'in truth' one, but precisely that they are radically and fundamentally different from, other than, one another. It is thus this idea of nature, as the idea of a determinacy which is not a logical determinacy, which is constituted through thinking thought as other than itself. And nature must be so conceived in a *philosophy* of nature simply because making claim to deriving the determinacy of nature *from* nature (which, according to Hegel, is the business of empirical science) would necessitate that we make claim to the capacity to know objects as they are in themselves.⁴⁴ And hence it would be to return to the aporetic scenario of the *PhG*. Thus Hegel's philosophy of nature, and by extension his whole real philosophy, is neither idealistic nor realistic in the traditional philosophical sense of these terms, since the paradigmatic contrast which renders them meaningful has been suspended through the *PhG*. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it attempts to be both at once: idealistic because it is purely philosophical in the manner of its constitution, yet realistic because the foundation of this constitutive process lies in the postulation by thought of the radical *non-identity* of thought and nature, and because Hegel requires that the 'discoveries' of the philosophy of nature must be coordinated with the results of empirical science.)⁴⁵

What is important to note is that in this philosophy of nature, Hegel makes no claim or attempt to usurp nature or reality as such, or to reduce them to a domain or aspect of thought. (A close inspection of the real philosophy reveals that the relation of logic to real philosophy is *not* one of a ground to that which it grounds, or of an essence to an appearance.) 'Nature', Hegel tells us, 'sets limits to philosophy, and it is the height of pointlessness to demand of the Concept that it should explain, and as it is said, construe or deduce these contingent products of nature.'⁴⁶ Nor is this philosophical consideration of nature held by Hegel to be determinative in an *a priori* fashion of the thinking about nature which takes place in empirical science. Consistent with his rejection, in the *PhG*, of the absolutization of any particular standpoint of thought, Hegel holds philosophy and empirical science to be of equal importance. They are both 'thinking cognitions of nature' which consider the same object but from different points of view. Consistent with the implicit intellectual pluralism which follows from the rejection of absolutism, Hegel sees philosophy and empirical science not as opposed to one another, but as differing according to 'the nature and manner of their thought'.⁴⁷ The philosophy of nature is purely rational. The scientific or rational character of the philosophy of nature is determined not by observation and experience, but solely by the immanent necessity of the logical domain of thinking as its range of consideration comes to include that which is other to itself.

(In the sense, considered above, of thought coming to think about that which is determined outside of itself, not allegedly as this determinacy *actually* comes to be determined as it is determined outside of thought. For to postulate that thesis it is necessary to return to the notion of the paradigmatic character of the opposition between thought and being, and then to move to the denial of the fundamental character of such a difference in order to hold that the process of pure thinking can discover the truth of things as they are 'in-themselves'. To hold this view of what a philosophy of nature is and can do, one must subscribe to the notion that thinking is in some way creative – even if only by analogy – of nature. In fact, according to Hegel, such a reduction of nature to thinking or thought is the greatest danger which lies in any attempt to think about nature.⁴⁸ But none the less, it is for him still possible to engage in a meaningful philosophical consideration of nature in so far as one recognizes the irreducibility of nature and reality to thought and then *thinks* what this means. It is the thinking through of this irreducibility which characterizes in general terms the process of thinking which takes place in the Hegelian philosophy of nature.)

The limited scope of a philosophy of nature in Hegel's conception of it is further indicated by the fact that, according to him, the philosophy of nature must, in the task of its preparation, take into account the discoveries of empirical physics. But for Hegel this does not mean that the results of the sciences constitute the scientific and objective foundation of the *philosophy* of nature. That derives, he holds, from the necessity of the logical Concept; that is from out of the immanently self-transformational process which thought undergoes when it comes to consider what is other than pure thought.⁴⁹ This is a self-transformational self-contrastive process – in Hegel's words, the thinking of 'the Idea in Otherness' – since, in a pure philosophy of nature as the thinking of the *idea* of nature, what 'nature' comes to be determined as cannot be held to be derived from an *actual cognition* of nature as an object. Because, for Hegel, that is the task of physics and also because, philosophically speaking, it requires the presupposition of the capacity to know 'objects' as they are 'in-themselves'. Something which is legitimate for empirical physics at least because it does not pretend to be philosophy in the sense of concerning itself with the question of the possibility, adequacy and legitimacy *überhaupt* of its manner of cognition.

The non-metaphysical intent behind Hegel's philosophy of nature is grounded in its foundational recognition that to think nature is to think about what is, at least initially, radically other than thought, and that a philosophy of nature – a sheer thinking about what is other than thought – must base its initial conception of nature on the grasping in and by thought of the idea of what is other than thought. According to Hegel, the danger in any thinking about nature is that we tend to transform

nature into a *thought thing*. In attempting to *think* what is other than thought as it is we transform them into something other than *itself*: 'By thinking things, we transform them into something universal; things are singularities however and the lion in general does not exist. We make them into something subjective, produced by us, belonging to us, and of course peculiar to us men; for the things of nature do not think, and are neither representations nor thought.'⁵⁰

For Hegel, the primal character of nature as a domain of determinacy other than thought is – in so far as we attempt to think this characteristic – *externality*. (This determinacy of the philosophy of nature as coordinated with the thinking of empirical physics is called *space*.)⁵¹ The concept of nature as initially determined is externality, and the determinacies of nature, as constituted through the self-contrastive process of thinking which is the thinking of thought, the Idea, in Otherness, are thought as being opposed to or in contrast with the nature of pure thought determinacies in the *WL*, and thus are constituted as exhibiting externality and independence *vis-à-vis* one another. (That is – and here we have a clue as to how the self-contrastive process of thinking the Idea in Otherness operates – unlike, or in contrast to, the pure thought determinacies which, in their initially being thought in the *WL* exhibited a lack of self-subsistence, an inability to stand on their own and a mutual interdependence with one another, the determinacies of nature in being thought in the philosophy of nature manifest themselves as independently subsisting determinacies, determinacies which stand in their own right *external to* one another. The thought process of thinking such determinacies is itself necessary – its necessity arising out of the immanent need for thought to think its other in order to complete the initial stage of its self-determination – but the determinacies conceived in this process, in being thought as the determinacies of what is other than pure thought, are thought of, in their determinacy, as being externally and [initially] contingently related to one other. According to Hegel, contingency as a fundamental aspect of nature must necessarily be thought as such in the philosophy of nature, as opposed to the freedom manifested in the self-determination of pure thinking. Unlike the pure thought determinacies in logic, these natural determinacies are not *thought of* as being generated the one out of the other – another example of the contrastive activity which marks the character of the transition from logic to real philosophy.)⁵² Because nature is other than thought, but equally, because we are attempting to *think* nature as such, as being what it is in being other than thought, 'nature' as so conceived in the philosophy of nature manifests itself as a *contradiction*.⁵³ (A good example of nature appearing as contradictory when it is thought could be found in Zeno's paradoxes or in the confrontation between wave and particle theories of light. One advantage of Hegel's thinking about nature is that the necessity of the appearance of

such contradictions is rationally accounted for, and even to some extent made a self-reflective principle of the activity. 'The thinking of contradiction is the essential moment of the Concept.'⁵⁴

As so conceived, nature is seen to be neither essentially logical nor mental in its basic characteristics, as though it were fundamentally nothing but thought itself or a derivative of thought. Nor is it thought of as an essentially unintelligible 'thing-in-itself' whose true determinacy can never be grasped by thought. Both of these conceptual frameworks play on the unquestioned philosophical adequacy of the 'thought/being' opposition. In the philosophy of nature we begin rather by attempting to think what 'other than thought' means, we attempt to discover in thought the idea or concept of what it is to be other than thought. What are the characteristics and what does it mean, for thought, for there to be a determinacy which is not a thought determinacy, a determinacy which does not have its determinacy determined by the process of activity of pure thought? Given that we have come in and through that activity of pure thinking to discover the essential characteristics of pure thought determinacy. Doing this will not give us nature, for as other than thought, nature cannot be given in thought. But it will give us, as I understand Hegel's claims, the idea of nature.

Is this project – which is only the first step in real philosophy – workable or intelligible? Clearly, even to attempt to answer that question lies beyond the scope of this paper. The only point I wish to make is that Hegel went about an attempt to do a philosophy of nature and of reality with an extraordinarily high degree of self-awareness concerning the dangers and difficulties inherent in such a project – particularly the danger of *idealizing* nature or of reducing it to a domain of thought – and with a confidence, perhaps unfounded, that just as thought could come to perceive these dangers and the essential limitations to thinking which they entail, so too thought is capable of overcoming them by means of recognition which does not at the same time do away with these limitations. On examination, we may wish to conclude that he has failed in his attempt. None the less, I do feel strongly that what he did attempt is worthy of a close examination, or re-examination, especially in an age where the coming to the perception by philosophers of certain paradoxes inherent to philosophy has led to their calling for, or announcing, the end of philosophy. I have tried to show the worthiness of Hegel's project in this respect by indicating that Hegel himself was both aware of and seriously engaged in the attempt to avoid just those metaphysical pitfalls and paradoxes which he is usually judged to have embraced or straightforwardly advocated. We should not allow the language of the times in which he wrote to function as a facile excuse for not spending the time to examine the ideas and arguments which lie behind this language.

In conclusion: Hegel's philosophy is anti-metaphysical in its being

opposed to the absolutization of any particular standpoint of thought and in its being grounded in the perception of the inherently fallacious and aporetic character of any such absolutization. But it is not at the same time anti-philosophical in the manner of Heidegger or Wittgenstein, just because it understands the error of metaphysics as lying not in the transgression of some or another absolute limit to thought or language, but rather as consisting just in the attempt (which both traditional metaphysics and much of post-Hegelian anti-metaphysical philosophy makes) to absolutize some discernible and genuine limit or standpoint as *the* limit or *the* standpoint of thought as such. As we saw, it is not the case that for Hegel there are no valid and significant limits to thought. It is rather that the philosophical ability which intelligibly articulates these limits at the same time shows thereby that they are not the absolute limits to thought as such.

Notes

1 Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, ed. Friedrich Engels, 4th edn, 3 vols. (1890; Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1975), vol. 1, Nachwort zur zweiten Auflage, p. 27. 'Aber gerade als Ich den ersten Band des "Kapital" ausarbeitete, gefiel sich das verdriessliche, anmassliche und mittelmässige Epigonentum, welches jetzt im gebildeten Deutschland das grosse Wort führt, darin, Hegel zu behandeln, wie der brave Moses Mendelssohn zu Lessings Zeit den Spinoza handelt hat, nämlich als "toten Hund".' *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), vol. 1, Postface to 2nd edn, p. 102. 'But when I was working at the first volume of *Capital*, the ill-humored, arrogant and mediocre epigones who now talk large in educated German circles began to take pleasure in treating Hegel in the same way as Moses Mendelssohn treated Spinoza in Lessing's time, namely, as a "dead dog".'

2 A recent exception to this is Richard Bernstein's article 'Why Hegel Now', *Review of Metaphysics* 31 (1977), 29–60.

3 Rudolf Carnap, 'Überwindung der Metaphysic durch die logische Analyse der Sprache', *Erkenntnis* (1932), 219–41. Translated and reprinted as 'The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language', in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A. J. Ayer (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959).

4 For a statement of this, the traditional reading of Hegel, see any of the following works. Bloch, *Subjekt-Object* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1962); Clark, *Logic and System* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971); Findlay, *Hegel, A re-examination* (New York: Collier, 1958); Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Heinrichs, *Die Logik der Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974); Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972); Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974); Kainz, *Hegel's Phenomenology*, vol. 1 (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1976); Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); Lauer, *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976); Lukács, *The Young Hegel* (London: Merlin Press, 1975); Werner Marx, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Harper &

Row, 1975); Wolfgang Marx, *Hegels Theorie logischer Vermittlung* (Stuttgart: Frommann Holzboog, 1972); Ottmann, *Das Scheitern einer Einleitung in Hegels Philosophie* (Munich: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1973); Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1973); Rosen, G. W. F. Hegel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Schrader-Klebert, *Das Problem des Anfangs in Hegels Philosophie* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1969).

5 The problem of Hegel's self-understanding lies in reconciling and making intelligible Hegel's apparently contradictory remarks concerning science and the *PhG* found in the opening of the *Science of Logic*: that the *PhG* is the presupposition for the logic and that the logic begins without presuppositions; that the *PhG* deduces the concept of science and that science cannot have its concept determined outside of or prior to itself. The solution to this problem will be presented further on in the text. For a general consideration of some of the various problems of interpretation which the *PhG* presents, see Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee*, especially the article 'Zur Deutung der Phänomenologie des Geistes'.

6 An exception to this manner of reading can be found in K. R. Dove's article 'Hegel's Deduction of the Concept of Science', in *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 23 (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, forthcoming).

7 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Erster Teil, Die Wissenschaft der Logik, Erster Band (1830; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, Theorie Werkausgabe ed, 1970), Einleitung, p. 41, paragraph no. 1. Translated by William Wallace as *Hegel's Logic, Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 3rd edn (1873; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Introduction, p. 4, paragraph no. 1. See also G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (hereafter, *WL*), Erster Band, Die Objektive Logik (1831; Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1971), vol. 1, p. 23. Translated as *Hegel's Science of Logic* by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 43. In the literature, the logic from the *Encyclopaedia* is referred to either as the 'lesser logic' or as the 'Encyclopaedia logic', with the *Science of Logic* being referred to either simply as 'the logic' or as the 'greater logic'.

8 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (hereafter, *PhG*) (1807; Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1952), Einleitung, p. 63. 'Es ist eine natürliche Vorstellung, dass, eh in der Philosophie an der Sache selbst, nämlich an der wirkliche Erkennen dessen, was in der Wahrheit ist, gegangen wird, es notwendig sei, vorher über das Erkennen sich zur verständigen.' English trans., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), Introduction, p. 46. On Hegel's stance in regard to this natural assumption, a subject which will be considered in detail further on in this article, see also *WL*, vol. 2, Meiner, p. 503: 'Was man gegen ihn vorbringen möchte – etwa von den Schranken der menschlichen Erkenntnis, von dem Erfordernis, ehe man an die Sache gehe, das Instrument des Erkennens kritisch zu untersuchen – sind selbst Voraussetzungen, die als konkrete Bestimmungen die Forderung ihrer Vermittlung und Begründung mit sich führen.' Miller trans., p. 841. As will become evident, according to the interpretation of the *PhG* presented here, it consists in the consideration of an attempted mediation and proof of these presuppositions.

9 *PhG* Meiner edn. p. 63; Miller trans., p. 46.

10 That, according to Hegel, consciousness in the *PhG* is engaged in such a critical self-examination which we, as phenomenologists observe: 'Das Bewusstsein gibt seinen Masstab an ihm selbst, und die Untersuchung wird dadurch eine Vergleichung seiner mit sich selbst sein; denn die Unterscheidung, welche soeben gemacht worden ist fällt in es . . . das Wesentliche aber ist, dies für die Ganze Untersuchung festzuhalten, dass diese beide Momente, *Begriff* und *Gegenstand*,

Füreinanderes und Ansichselbst, in das Wissen, das wir untersuchen, selbst fallen, und hiemit wir nicht nötig haben, Masstäbe mitzubringen und *unsere* Einfälle und Gedanken bei der Untersuchen, zu applizzieren.' *Meiner* edn, pp. 71–2; *Miller* trans., pp. 53–4. Note also *Meiner* edn, pp. 72ff.; *Miller* trans., pp. 54ff.

11 *PhG* *Meiner* edn, pp. 65–6; *Miller* trans., pp. 48–9.

12 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), *Theorie* Werkausgabe edn, vol. 20, p. 334. 'Das Erkenntnisvermögen untersuchen heisst, es erkennen. Die Forderung ist also diese: man soll das Erkenntnisvermögen erkennen, ehe man erkennt; es ist dasselbe wie mit dem Schwimmenwollen, ehe man ins Wasser geht.' My translation is given in this text. *Standard English* edn, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane and Simson, 3 vols. (1896; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 3: 428.

13 *PhG*, *Meiner* edn, pp. 64–5; *Miller* trans., p. 47.

14 *PhG*, *Meiner* edn., pp. 65–6; *Miller* trans., pp. 48–9.

15 '... könnten sie als zufällige und willkürliche Vorstellungen gerade verworfen. ...' 'Mit mehr Recht dagegen könnte die Mühe gespart werden, von solchen Vorstellungen und Redensarten wodurch die Wissenschaft selbst abgewehrt werden soll, überhaupt Notiz zu nehmen, denn sie machen nur eine leere Erscheinung des Wissens aus, welche von der auftretenden Wissenschaft unmittelbar verschwindet.' *Meiner* edn, pp. 65–6; *Miller* trans., p. 48.

16 'Aber die Wissenschaft darin, dass sie auftritt, ist sie selbst Erscheinung; ihr Auftreten ist noch nicht sie in ihrer Wahrheit ausgeführt und ausgebreitet.' 'Es ist hiebei gleichgültig, sich Vorzustellen, dass sie die Erscheinung ist, weil sie neben anderem auftritt, oder jenes andere anwahr Wissen ihr Erscheinung zu nehmen.' *Meiner* edn, p. 66; *Miller* trans., p. 48.

17 'Die Wissenschaft muss sich aber von diesem Scheine befreien; und sie kann dies nur dadurch, das sie gegen ihn wendet.' *Meiner* edn, p. 66; *Miller* trans., p. 48.

18 'Aus diesem Grunde soll hier die Darstellung des erscheinenden Wissen vorgenommen werden.' *Meiner* edn, p. 66; *Miller* trans., p. 49.

19 '... ein trockenes Versichen gelt aber gerade soviel als ein anderes'. *Meiner* edn, p. 66; *Miller* trans., p. 49.

20 *ibid.* See also *PhG* edn, p. 71; *Miller* trans., p. 53.

21 '... wird die Natur des Erkennens überhaupt sowohl innerhalb der Wissenschaft der Logik Betrachtet'. 'Vor der Wissenschaft aber schon über das Erkennen in reine kommen wollen, heisst verlangen, dass es *ausserhalb* derselben erörtert werden sollte; *ausserhalb* der Wissenschaft lässt sich dies wenigstens nicht auf wissenschaftliche Weise, um die es hier allein zu tun ist, bewerkstelligen.' *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 52–3; *Miller* trans., p. 68.

22 'Die Logik dargegen kann Keine dieser Formen der Reflexion oder Regeln und Gesetzte des Denkens voraussetzen, denn sie machen einen Teil ihres Inhalts selbst aus und haben erst anerhalb ihrer begründet zu werden. Nicht nur aber die Angabe der wissenschaftlichen Methode, sondern auch der *Begriff* selbst der *Wissenschaft* überhaupt gehört zu ihrem Inhalte, und zwar, macht ihr letztes Resultat aus; was sie ist kann sie daher nicht voraussagen, sondern ihre ganze Abhandlung bringt dieses Wissen von ihr selbst erst als ihr Letztes and als ihr Vollendung hervor ... der Begriff derselben erzeugt sich in ihrem Verlaufe und kann somit nicht vorausgeschickt werden.' *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 23; *Miller* trans., p. 43.

23 For Hegel's outline of the state of affairs sketched out in this paragraph,

see *PhG*, Meiner edn, pp. 70–4, especially, p. 72; Miller trans., pp. 52–6, especially p. 54.

24 'Denn das Bewusstsein ist einerseits Bewusstsein des Gegenstandes, anderseits Bewusstsein seiner selbst; Bewusstsein dessen was ihm das Wahre ist, und Bewusstsein seines Wissens davon. Idem beide *für dasselbe* sind, ist es selbst ihre Vergleichung; es wird *für dasselbe*, ob sein Wissen von dem Gegenstande diesem entspricht oder nicht. Der Gegenstand scheint zwar für dasselbe nur so zu sein, wie es ihn weiss; es scheint gleichsam nicht dahinter kommen zu können, wie er, *nicht für dasselbe*, sondern wie er *an sich* ist, und also auch sein Wissen nicht an ihm prüfen zu können. Allein gerade darin, dass es überhaupt von einem Gegenstande weiss, ist schon der Unterschied vorhanden, dass *ihm* etwas das *Ansich*, ein anderes Moment aber das Wissen oder das Sein des Gegenstandes *für das* Bewusstsein ist. Auf dieser Unterscheidung, welche vorhanden ist, beruht die Prüfung. Entspricht sich in dieser Vergleichung beides nicht, so scheint das Bewusstsein sein Wissen ändern zu müssen, um es dem Gegenstande gemäss zu machen; aber in der Veränderung des Wissens ändert sich ihm in der Tat auch der Gegenstand selbst, denn das vorhandene Wissen war wesentlich ein Wissen von dem Gegenstande: mit dem Wissen wird auch er ein anderer, denn er gehörte wesentlich diesem Wissen an. Es wird hiemit dem Bewusstsein, dass dasjenige, was ihm vorher das *Ansich* war, nicht an sich ist, oder dass es nur *für es an sich* war. Indem es also an seinem Gegenstande sein Wissen diesem nicht entsprechend findet, hält auch der Gegenstand selbst nicht aus; oder der Masstab der Prüfung ändert sich, wenn dasjenige, dessen Masstab er sein sollte, in der Prüfung nicht besteht; und die Prüfung ist nicht nur eine Prüfung des Wissens, sondern auch ihres Masstabes.' *PhG*, Meiner edn, pp. 72–3; Miller trans., pp. 54–5.

'Dies bietet sich hier so dar, dass, indem das, was zuerst als der Gegenstand erschien, dem Bewusstsein zu einem Wissen von ihm herabsinkt und das *Ansich* zu einem *Für-das-Bewusstsein-Sein des Ansich* wird, dies der neue Gegenstand ist, womit auch eine neue Gestalt des Bewusstseins auftritt, welcher etwas anderes das Wesen ist als der vorhergehenden. Dieser Umstand ist es, welcher die ganze Folge der Gestalten des Bewusstseins in ihrer Notwendigkeit leitet'. *PhG*, Meiner edn, p. 74; Miller trans., p. 56.

25 For Hegel's account of Absolute Knowing, note the following: 'Diese letzte Gestalt des Geistes . . . ist das Absolute Wissen; es ist der sich in Geistsgestalt wissende Geist oder das *begreifende Wissen*. Die *Wahrheit* [the in-itself] ist nicht nur *an sich* vollkommen der *Gewissheit* [the knowing of it] gleich, sondern hat auch die *Gestalt* der Gewissheit seiner selbst [that is the object is fully approximate to the knowing or knowledge of it and also has the *form* of this knowing which is *certain of itself*; in short, the object has the form of the knowing of the object, of self-knowing knowing] oder sie ist in ihrem Dasein. d.h. für den wissenden Geist in der Form des Wissens seiner selbst.' *PhG*, Meiner edn, p. 556; Miller trans., p. 485. Again, in Absolute Knowing, the object in its existence, in its objectivity, is *for* this knowing spirit in the form of spirit's self-knowing. See also Meiner edn, pp. 546–7; Miller trans., pp. 476–7; and the following: 'Die Natur, Momente und Bewegung dieses Wissens hat sich so ergeben, dass es die reine *Fürsichsein* des Selbstbewusstseins ist.' Meiner edn, p. 556; Miller trans., p. 486.

26 Note also *WL*, Meiner edn, 1: 53–4; Miller trans., p. 67. Here, Hegel recapitulates Absolute Knowing as described above and also presents it as collapsing into indeterminateness.

27 *PhG*, Meiner edn, p. 67; Miller trans., p. 42; *WL*, Meiner edn, 1: 54; Miller trans., p. 69.

28 *PhG*, Meiner edn, p. 549; Miller trans., p. 479.

29 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 53–4; *Miller* trans., pp. 68–9.

30 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 60, 59, 54, 57, 60; *Miller* trans., pp. 75, 74, 70, 69, 72, 75.

31 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 23, 52–3; *Miller* trans., pp. 43, 68.

32 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 53–4; *Miller* trans., pp. 68–9.

33 'Logisch ist der Anfang, indem er im Element des frei für sich seienden Denkens, im *reinen Wissen* gemacht werden soll. *Vermittelt* ist er hiemit dadurch, dass das reine Wissen die letzte, absolute Wahrheit des *Bewusstseins* ist. . . . Die Logik hat insofern die Wissenschaft des erscheinenden Geistes zu ihrer Voraussetzung, welche die Notwendigkeit und damit den Beweis der Wahrheit des Standpunkts, der das reine Wissen ist, wie dessen Vermittlung überhaupt, enthält und aufzeigt' *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 53; *Miller* trans., pp. 68–9. 'Das reine Wissen, als in diese Einheit *zusammengegangen*, hat alle Beziehung auf ein Anderes und auf Vermittlung aufgehoben; es ist das Unterschiedslose; dieses Unterschiedslose hört somit selbst auf, Wissen zu sein; es ist nur *einfache Unmittelbarkeit* vorhanden. Die einfache Unmittelbarkeit ist selbst eine Reflexionsausdruck und bezieht sich auf den Unterscheid von dem Vermittelten. In ihrem wahren Ausdruck ist daher dieser einfache Unmittelbarkeit das reine Sein.' *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 54; *Miller* trans., p. 69. 'Hier ist das Sein das Anfangende, als durch Vermittlung, und zwar durch sie, welche zugleich Aufheben ihrer selbst ist, entstanden dargestellt; mit der Voraussetzung des reinen Wissens als Resultat des endlichen Wissens, des Bewusstseins. Soll aber Keine Voraussetzung gemacht, so bestimmt er sich nur dadurch, dass es der Anfang der Logik, des Denkens für sich sein soll.' *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 54; *Miller* trans., pp. 69–70.

34 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 51; *Miller* trans., p. 67.

35 Hegel's denial that the *WL* can begin with any presuppositions etc.: *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 23–4, 56, 57, 60; *Miller* trans., pp. 43, 68, 72, 72–3, 75.

36 Hegel's assertion that the *WL* presupposes the *PhG*: *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 30, 32, 42, 53; *Miller* trans., pp. 49, 51, 60, 68. Hegel's specific claim that what the *WL* presupposes is liberation from the opposition of consciousness: *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 30, 32; *Miller* trans., pp. 49, 51. That the *WL* is both mediated and immediate: *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 1: 51; *Miller* trans., pp. 67, 68; also, *Meiner* edn, 1: 53–4; *Miller* trans., pp. 69–70.

37 I am thinking here specifically of *Das Scheitern einer Einleitung in Hegels Philosophie* (Munich: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1973), by H. H. Ottmann, and *Das Problem des Anfangs in Hegels Philosophie* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1969), by K. Schrader-Klebert. These two studies present marvellous examples of an ironical side in the dialectic of philosophical criticism. Ottmann, in attacking that very idea of an introduction to science which, as we have seen, *consciousness*, in the *PhG*, attempts, unwittingly, in what he presents as a critique of Hegel, agrees with Hegel's position. (That is in the sense that a presuppositionless science can have no positive introduction as one which legitimates its foundational method or principles.) And Schrader-Klebert, in attacking the very idea of a self-grounding knowing, presents us – in what *she* takes to be a fundamental destruction of Hegel's position – with an excellent recapitulation of the very critique of Absolute Knowing which Hegel consummates in the *PhG*. The source of these – and other – misdirected attacks on Hegel lies, I believe, in the tendency to confuse *Hegel's* position with that of consciousness, coupled with the failure to examine carefully exactly what Hegel's claims are concerning the 'Concept of Science' deduced by the *PhG*. For the former it is Hegel, in the extreme obscurity of so much of his writing, who is more to be blamed. But in the latter case it is quite clear from what Hegel writes in the opening of the *WL* that the *PhG* is neither meant to

nor claims to establish any determinate principle, method, rules or presuppositions which ground the science in the ordinary sense. Thus, in what Ottmann and Schrader-Klebert present as critiques of Hegel, they are in agreement with his own conclusions and are attacking a straw man. It is Hegel's aim in the *PhG* to show that, and why, just this traditional idea of an introduction to science *cannot* work, exactly as Ottmann and Schrader-Klebert maintain. Of course for Hegel, it is in and through such a critique that one at the same time indicates how a radically but not absolutely presuppositionless science *can* be initiated.

38 'Der bisherige Begriff der Logik beruht auf den im gewöhnlichen Bewusstsein ein für allemal vorausgesetzten Trennung des *Inhalts* der Erkenntnis und der *Form* derselben, oder der *Wahrheit* der *Gewissheit*. Es wird erstens vorausgesetzt, dass der Stoff des Erkennens als eine fertige Welt ausserhalb des Denkens an und für sich vorhanden, dass das Denken für sich leer sei, als eine Form äusserlich zu jener Materie hinzutrete, sich damit erfülle, erst daran einen Inhalt gewinne und dadurch ein reales Erkennen werde.' *WL*, Meiner edn, 1: 24; Miller trans., pp. 44.

39 'Diese Ansichten über das Verhältnis des Subjekts und Objekts zueinander drücken die Bestimmungen aus, welche die Natur unsers gewöhnlichen, des erscheinenden Bewusstseins ausmachen; aber diese Vorurteile, in die Vernunft übertragen, als ob in ihr dasselbe Verhältnis stattfinde, als ob diese Verhältnis an und für sich Wahrheit habe, so sind sie die Irrtümer, deren durch alle Teile des geistigen und natürlichen Universums durchgeführte Widerlegung die Philosophie ist, oder die vielmehr, wie sie die Eingang in die Philosophie versperren, vor derselben abzulegen sind.' *WL*, Meiner edn, 1: 25; Miller trans., p. 45. It is my contention that the *PhG* as the deduction of the concept of science consists in nothing but the demonstration of the necessity of this discarding.

40 In the third of the three 'logics' of the *WL* – the logic of the Concept or Notion – Hegel reiterates this important point. He emphasizes that the logical Concept, 'when it has developed into a *concrete existence* that is itself free, is none other than the *I* or pure self-consciousness'. *WL*, Meiner edn, 2: 220; Miller trans., p. 583. But he stresses that this Concept, in its being considered as such, as purely logical Concept in the *WL*, cannot be understood in terms of the structure of the ego or of self-consciousness. The nature of the ego or consciousness, as grasped in systematic philosophy, is a topic for the philosophy of spirit, namely, for the *Encyclopaedia*. 'It is true that the pure determinations of being, essence, and the Notion constitute the ground plan and the inner simple framework of the forms of Spirit; spirit as *intuiting* and also as *sensuous consciousness* is in the form of immediate being; and similarly, Spirit as *ideating* and as *perceiving* has risen from being to the level of essence or reflection. But these concrete forms as little concern the science of logic as do the concrete forms assumed by the logical categories in nature . . . here too [in logic] the Notion is to be regarded not as the act of the self-conscious understanding, not as the *subjective understanding*, but as the Notion in its own absolute character. . . . But the logical form of the Notion is independent of its non-spiritual, and also of its spiritual shapes. The necessary premonition on this point has already been given in the Introduction. It is a point that must not wait to be established *within* logic itself but must be cleared up *before* that science is begun.' *WL*, Meiner edn, 2: 224–5; Miller trans., p. 586.

41 *WL*, Meiner, 1: 21; Miller trans., p. 42. And Hegel tells us that, in conventional logic, 'the forms which come up for treatment as well as their further modifications are only, as it were, historically taken up; they are not subject to criticism to determine whether they are in and for themselves *true*. Thus, for

example, the form of the positive judgment is accepted as something perfectly correct in itself, the question whether such a judgment is true depending solely on the content. Whether this form is *in its own self* a form of truth, whether the proposition it enunciates, the *individual* is a *universal*, is not inherently dialectical, is a question that no one thinks of investigating. . . . Even if we are to see in logical forms nothing more than the formal functions of thought, they would for that reason be worthy of investigation to ascertain how far, on this account, they correspond to the truth. A logic that does not perform this task can at most claim the value of a descriptive natural history of the phenomenon of thinking. It is an infinite merit of Aristotle, one that must fill us with the highest admiration for the power of that genius, that he was the first to undertake this description. It is necessary however to go further and to ascertain both the systematic connection of these forms and their value.' WL, Meiner edn, 2: 233–4; Miller trans., pp. 594–5. 'It is an infinite merit of the Kantian philosophy to have drawn attention to this uncritical procedure [Hegel is referring to Kant's having examined, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the dialectical nature as such of certain thought determinacies] and by so doing to have given the impetus to the restoration of logic and dialectic in the sense of the examination of the *determinations of thought in and for themselves*.' WL, Meiner edn, 2: 493; Miller trans., p. 833.

42 'The derivation of the real from it [the logic] if we want to call it derivation, consists in the first place essentially in this, that the Notion in its formal abstraction reveals itself as incomplete and through its own immanent dialectic passes over into reality; but it does not fall back again onto a ready made reality confronting it and take refuge in something which has shown itself to be the unessential element of Appearance because, having looked around for something better, it has failed to find it; on the contrary, it produces the reality from its own resources.' WL, Meiner edn, 2: 230; Miller trans., pp. 591–2.

43 *Enzyklopädie*, Zweites Teil, Die Naturphilosophie, p. 24, paragraph 247, 'Die Natur hat sich als die Idee in der Form des *Andersseins* ergeben.' *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 3 vols, ed. and trans. M. J. Petry (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 1: 205, paragraph 247.

44 WL, Meiner edn, 2: 230; Miller trans., pp. 591–2.

45 *Enzyklopädie*, Die Naturphilosophie, pp. 15, 20; paragraph 246, including remark and addition. Petry trans., pp. 197, 201; paragraph 246, including remark and addition.

46 'Natur setzt die Philosophie Grenzen und das Ungehörigste ist, von dem Begriffe zu verlangen, er soll dergleichen Zufälligkeiten begreifen – und, wie es genannt worden, konstruieren, deduzieren' *Enzyklopädie*, p. 35, paragraph 250, remark; Petry trans., p. 215, paragraph 250, remark.

47 *Enzyklopädie*, Introduction, p. 11; Petry trans., p. 193.

48 *Enzyklopädie*, p. 16, paragraph 246, addition; Petry trans., p. 198, paragraph 246, addition.

49 *Enzyklopädie*, p. 15, paragraph 246, remark; Petry trans., p. 197, paragraph 246, remark.

50 'Dadurch, dass wir die Dinge denken, machen wir sie zu etwas Allgemeinem; die Dinge sind aber einzelne, und der Löwe überhaupt existiert nicht. Wir machen sie zu einem Subjektiven, von uns Produzierten, uns Angehörigen, und zwar uns als Menschen Eigentümlichen; denn die Naturdinge denken nicht und sind keine Vorstellungen oder Gedanken.' *Enzyklopädie*, p. 16, paragraph 246, addition; Petry trans., p. 198, paragraph 246, addition.

51 *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 24, 41, paragraphs 247, 254; Petry trans., pp. 205, 223, paragraphs 247, 254.

52 *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 47, 31, paragraphs 248, 249, Petry trans., pp. 208, 212, paragraphs 248, 249.

53 *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 28, 34, paragraph 248, remark, 250; Petry trans., pp. 209, 215, paragraph 248, remark 250.

54 *WL*, *Meiner* edn, 2: 546; Miller trans., p., 835. 'Es [formal thought] macht sich darüber den bestimmten Grundsatz, dass der Widerspruch nicht denkbar sei; in der Tat aber ist das Denken des Widerspruchs das Wesentliche Moment des Begriffes.'

Conceiving reality without foundations: Hegel's neglected strategy for *Realphilosophie*

Richard Dien Winfield

Although Hegel has frequently been granted felicitous insight into the rich detail of known facts, his strategy for conceiving reality has been roundly dismissed as a relic of philosophical hypertrophy. Such dismissal is certainly understandable considering how often Hegel's theory of reality has been interpreted to be the child of either a leviathan metaphysical construction or a demonically inventive transcendental constitution. Unfortunately, the weight of these interpretations has not just led to the general discrediting of Hegel's system. It has also virtually banished from view a central strand in Hegel's argument which suggests an entirely different approach offering a viable, yet ignored strategy for conceiving reality without falling prey to the foundational dilemmas afflicting metaphysical and transcendental argument. There is no better way of comprehending the significance and neglected promise of this strategy than first following in broad outline the path of inquiry which has led to the quagmire in which thought today confronts reality.

I The flight from reality of positive science

In an age when philosophers proclaim their own inability to conceive reality, nothing seems more appropriate than simply taking up what is given and examining it as offered. With philosophical thought abandoning the real, and resigning itself to exercises in logical consistency and edification, positive science would seem to have been granted the domain of truth for its own. Since positive scientists address their subject matter only in so far as it can be taken for granted, they have felt little need to doubt its reality for science any more than science's access to it.

Nevertheless, however positive science rises to the task of enjoying the self-evidence of its subject matter, the result can be no more than the

very same formal consistency to which an obliging philosophy stands condemned. Since positive science immediately considers a given subject matter, its analysis is relative to both the particular content it puts under investigation and its own given relation to this object. Whether it begins by turning to certain facts, meditating upon an inner experience, or simply defining its terms, positive science can never claim an absolute knowledge of reality as it is in itself, but only an understanding of what it assumes to be given for it. Since its object is just as much an unjustified postulate as the validity of its knowing of it, positive science can arrive at no truth, but only the formal consistency of properly deriving conclusions from a given assumption according to some accepted procedure.

Thus positive science is left with the very same inability to know reality that has been ascribed to philosophy. This levelling of the two disciplines can hardly exclude the possibility of conceiving reality, however, for just as positive science cannot get at the truth of what is real, so it cannot legitimately claim that there be no other knowing than its own. The attempt of sceptical positivists such as Quine¹ to reduce philosophy to positive science founders on this very point. They have ignored that the doubly conditioned standpoint of positive science cannot be asserted to be the inescapable predicament of all discourse, since the acknowledged relativity of positive science leaves it itself unable to ground the universality they claim for it.

II Metaphysics and the dilemma of first asking 'What is?'

Despite the recurring temptation, philosophy has never been able to restrict itself to the relative understanding which positive science properly pursues. From the start, philosophy has instead sought to conceive reality without forsaking truth.

When this calling emerged from passive wonder by asking, 'What is?', it immediately took the form subsequently both hailed and branded as metaphysics. Given its constitutive question, this approach has inveterately conceived reality by first presenting some specific content and immediately claiming that it is not something merely stipulated by the philosopher as an object for his or her own knowing, but something in itself, given *in res* independently of any reference to it.

Since whatever thus gets taken to be true in itself is so by virtue of being immediately given, there can be no mediating principle by which the claimed reality of different contents can be judged. On these terms any given content is just as susceptible of being presented as something in itself as any other. Consequently metaphysics could not help but offer a sorry parade of completely different competing systems of reality, each equally claiming immediate and unqualified truth.

Of course, such conflict could not escape the eyes of metaphysicians themselves, and attempts were made to surmount the dilemma. Some thinkers sought an absolute first principle of reality which would overcome the competing claims of different given contents by deriving them all out of itself in an ordered construction of the totality of reality. However, once engaged, their attempts necessarily fell prey to disputes concerning not only what was the first principle, but also what constituted the criteria for the completeness and validity of its presumed derivation of all reality. A vicious circle always seemed to arise, where in order to judge the truth of the stipulated first principle, one already had to have true knowledge of the scope and interconnection of the full content of reality, something that should be unattainable without relying upon the first principle, if the latter were truly the basis of everything else.

In response to these difficulties, Socrates argued alternatively that in order to answer the question, 'What is?', one first had to call opinion into question, purge oneself of all assumptions concerning reality and reach the state of knowing nothing at all, where the quest for truth generically begins. From that putatively presuppositionless standpoint one could then directly proceed to know reality as it is in itself.

The problem with this alternative becomes clear when Plato takes up the Socratic programme in the discussion of the divided line in the *Republic*, moving beyond the negative outcome of the dialectic of Socratic questioning. There Plato describes how, upon reaching that point beyond all assumption, one faces a content presupposing no other, out of which all true reality gets determined. This unconditioned givenness is the Good, and from it one can proceed without reference to anything else to conceive one Idea after another of things as they are in themselves. Although Plato nowhere shows how the specific Ideas immanently emerge from the Good, even if one allows that they do, the Platonic approach can never account for how one can decide what is the valid givenness beyond all assumption from which all reality derives, without already taking for granted what can and cannot be presuppositionless in itself. So long as any specific content is ascribed immediate and unconditioned reality, there is nothing that can legitimate it against the opposing claim of any other arbitrary assumption. Whether it be a particular fact, an all-encompassing first principle or the determining source of everything real, whatever is immediately put forward as true in itself can comprise no true reality, but only the referent of a knowing that takes the content of reality for granted.

This holds, even if one were to follow Aristotle, and undertake a study of being qua being, in recognition that being must first be conceived in its own right in so far as nothing real can lack being or therefore be conceived without a prior understanding of being itself. Again, arbitrary assumptions would undermine the whole enterprise, for how could the

study of being qua being stand as first philosophy without assuming in reality the primary and elemental character ascribed to being?

By asking 'What is?' as the first question of philosophy, metaphysics thus perennially commits the error of making immediate reference to reality. No matter what it gives in answer, metaphysical discourse is always left presupposing the correlation between the content of its conception and that of the real. The arbitrariness of such postulated congruence is insurmountable. Because metaphysics constitutively begins its inquiry with some presumed knowledge of what is in itself, it can never establish the correspondence of thought and reality which its own truth claims depend upon. As a result, the metaphysical conception of reality can never be more than a mere stipulation.

If this leaves metaphysics without any knowledge of what is, it does not mean that reality cannot be known. On the contrary, the failure of metaphysics to know the real casts in doubt the presumed correspondence of thought and reality while indicating that all immediate reference to reality must be ruled out.

Given, however, that all reference to reality occurs within knowing, the experience of metaphysics would seem to leave philosophy with not only doubt and suspicion, but also the positive task of first investigating the character and limits of knowing before asking, 'What is?'

III The self-elimination of all transcendental theory of reality

Once this now familiar transcendental turn is taken, the problem of conceiving reality is not simply put off till after knowing is certified ready and able. Rather, the conception of reality falls itself within the consideration of knowing – on two accounts.

To begin with, if the correspondence of thought and reality be called into question and all immediate reference to reality be proscribed, then an examination of the full character and limits of true knowing will have to consider the knowledge of reality to be determined in terms of the structure of knowing itself.

Furthermore, since the knowing under investigation claims truth for its knowledge only by both distinguishing and comparing its concepts with the objects to which they are to correspond, the critical assessment of true knowing will involve considering what knowledge refers to, and how it can be in accord with its concept.

Although this posing of the matter is predicated upon a rejection of all direct reference to reality, it would seem to involve metaphysical claims of its own concerning what knowing is in itself, and do so in such a manner that any knowledge of reality would be precluded from the start.

If knowing can be investigated in its own right, independently of any particular knowledge of reality, this would seem to assume that knowing is either an instrument or medium through which reality is encountered, or a structure of referring which constitutes the very object to which it refers.

In the first case, knowledge of reality as it is in itself would be impossible, since what would be obtained by the act of the instrument or the transmission of the medium would be something already worked upon and distorted by knowing's process. If one attempted to get at the unaltered reality by somehow subtracting the effects of such knowing, one would only be left where one was before knowing, namely, with no knowledge of reality at all.²

If, on the other hand, one eliminates all reference to something in itself, and instead conceives knowing as referring to an object generated in the act of knowing itself, then one seems condemned to solipsism, where knowledge can never be of anything more than one's own subjective stipulation.

In the face of these difficulties, any transcendental conception of reality would necessarily require solving a problem first posed, if not satisfactorily answered, by Kant in his transcendental deduction of the categories.

As Kant recognizes, once metaphysical reference is excluded and objective knowledge is seen as something to be determined in terms of the structure of knowing itself, then solipsism can be avoided and knowledge of reality redeemed if two conditions be fulfilled.

First, the knowing in terms of which all reference proceeds must be such that what it refers to as the object of its knowledge is not merely its own subjective stipulation, but something given independently of its reference to it. Of course, if the referent of knowledge is just knowing's own stipulation, then one is left with the solipsism of positive science, where the known object has no more reality than what the knower assumes it to have.

Second, even if the object of knowledge be something in itself, and no mere stipulation of the knower, there will be no knowledge of reality unless knowing be such that its knowledge corresponds to what it knows. Since, however, all immediate reference to reality is illegitimate, the correspondence at issue cannot be validated by any comparison falling outside the structure of knowing, that is between it and some thing in itself. Rather, the only way transcendental philosophy can escape solipsism and achieve knowledge of reality is if it demonstrates that the conditions for the conception of what is given at the same time provide the conditions under which objects can be given in correspondence with those concepts.

In the 'Transcendental Deduction of the Categories', Kant rightfully

raises this very problem as the touchstone of his entire philosophical project. His particular solution, however, immediately goes awry due to the complementary metaphysical assumptions upon which it depends.

Through his openly 'metaphysical' deduction of the categories (B95–B116), Kant supplies the content of these most essential elements of knowing's own structure by immediately referring to the cognitive reality of certain functions handed down traditionally from Aristotelian logic.

Then, having determined the conditions of knowing through a metaphysical reference, Kant proceeds to characterize the conditions of the objects of its knowledge in the same manner. What knowing refers to as its object is claimed to be an appearance of some thing-in-itself which is not known in terms of the knowing under critique, but in virtue of an immediate reference to reality.

Therefore, when Kant shows how the categories allow the conditions of a possible experience to coincide with the conditions for the possibility of the appearances to which knowing adequately refers, his argument is already undermined by the same metaphysical stipulation it seeks to avoid.

Clearly, if the problem of the transcendental deduction of the categories is to be resolved, with knowledge of reality secured, both the conditions of knowing and the conditions of what it knows must be determined independently of all immediate reference to reality. In the face of this challenge, thinkers such as Fichte, the young Schelling and Husserl have attempted to purge transcendental inquiry of all metaphysical vestiges by seeking to eliminate all immediate reference to a thing-in-itself and to derive the entire content of the conditions of knowing through its transcendental critique.

However persistently such attempts be pursued, they cannot possibly redeem any knowledge of reality or any valid knowledge of knowing, for once transcendental philosophy becomes self-critical, its own constitutive framework collapses.

To see this, all one need do is consider what would happen if transcendental philosophy were to forsake all metaphysical reference to its own object of inquiry. For this to occur, the knowing which performs the critique of knowing would itself have to fulfil the conditions of the knowing under investigation. This means that if the transcendental philosopher is to avoid stipulating the conditions of knowing in a metaphysical manner, that philosopher must relate to the subject matter in just the same way that the knowing under critique properly relates to its object. Since what is to be known by the transcendental philosopher is the structure of knowing in terms of which all true knowledge of reality is possible, the transcendental inquiry can legitimately determine what such

true knowing is only if its own discourse refers to true knowing just as true knowing refers to what is for it.

This requirement immediately offers its own solution. Because the knowing under critique is to be the knowing whose knowledge corresponds to its object and is certain thereof, while the critique of knowing is to have such true knowing as its object, the two can only coincide if true knowing is a knowing of true knowing. In that case, what the transcendental inquiry performs is precisely what it investigates, just as knowing is itself self-critique. Nevertheless, when transcendental discourse thus becomes fully consistent, with metaphysical reference giving way to a knowing which does its own critique, the achieved equalization of transcendental argument with the knowing it investigates has just as much eliminated all distinction between knowing and its object.

Knowing and the object of knowing are here identical because true knowing, the object known through transcendental investigation, is itself a knowing of true knowing, whereas the knowing exercised by the transcendental philosopher is nothing other than a knowing of true knowing as well. Since transcendental knowing is therefore no different from its object, true knowing, the former's identity with its object equally signifies that true knowing is indistinguishable from its object.

This resulting solipsism is of fatal consequence, for the ability to make a distinction between reference and referent, knowing and object known, is what first allows for true knowing and transcendental philosophy itself. If knowing and its object cannot be differentiated, knowing lacks the independent referent it needs to contrast against its knowledge, if the latter is to be the knowledge of something real, and not just of its own representation. In effect, the absence of such distinction leaves no knowing at all, for without any referent to refer to, there is no reference, or any knowledge to be had.

Similarly, only in so far as knowing can be considered separately from its specific object can the conditions for knowing any object be investigated at all. When, on the contrary, knowing and its object have collapsed into identity, as happens when transcendental inquiry becomes self-referentially consistent, no *epochē* or transcendental reflection can be made. At one with its object, knowing can no longer be grasped by itself, for not only does it have no structure apart, but none whatsoever, in so far as its constitutive relation of reference has been eliminated.³

As a result, transcendental philosophy ultimately fails to secure the conditions for its own quest, just as much as the conditions for knowledge of reality.

IV The transcendental impasse of holism

In recent years, it has become increasingly recognized that the dilemma of transcendental argument does not concern the particular content ascribed to the transcendental condition, but rather the foundational claim of a transcendental condition in general. Whether the ground of objective discourse is characterized as Kantian noumenal subjectivity, an ideal speech situation of non-distorted communication, or the given practice of ordinary language, the same fatal problem arises of having to equalize the transcendental standpoint with its object in order to avoid metaphysical stipulation and achieve self-referential consistency.

Currently the programme of philosophical holism has been drawing adherents as a solution to the foundational dilemmas of transcendental argument. Advanced in varying forms by such thinkers as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Richard Rorty, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Hilary Putnam,⁴ the holist strategy seeks to extricate philosophy from metaphysical and transcendental problems, by affirming that all truth claims proceed from pragmatic decisions that stipulate norms for justification and thereby provide the commensurable framework allowing for meaningful argument once they are accepted as practice agreed upon by those in conversation. These underlying pragmatic decisions may already be enshrined in the normal discourse of a shared culture and tradition, or they may frame a new paradigm of science challenging the old. Whatever the case, holism argues, objectivity always consists in agreement rather than in the accurate mirroring of nature or in the constituting activity of a transcendental subject. Accordingly, the holist would argue, philosophy must restrict itself to interpreting and contrasting the different conventions of discourse, without imposing any preferred set of terms of its own. Instead of seeking a true knowledge of reality, philosophy can only aim at an edification which fosters a self-conscious awareness of the practices through which objectivity is construed.

By limiting philosophy to such edification, the holist claims to have avoided all reference either to reality or to transcendental conditions in his own discourse. However, precisely by making this claim, holism does not advance its own pragmatic characterization of knowing as a mere matter of agreement, as arbitrary as any other description. Rather, holism asserts it as a juridical conception that accurately represents the universal predicament of discourse and, on that basis, precludes the legitimacy of any systematic philosophy with truth as its aim. In so doing, holism ends up making a metaphysical claim concerning the reality of conversation, only to revert to transcendental foundationalism by treating this putative reality of conversation as the ultimate context in which justifications are constituted. In other words, holism's affirmation of the universality of its

pragmatic description of discourse renders the latter a preferred set of terms, and thereby reintroduces the very same dilemmas it seeks to avoid.

Consequently, holism presents no alternative to the problems of meta-physical and transcendental argument, but only one more example of their well-travelled path.

V Starting with nothing: the development from being to categorical totality

Can there then be any non-positive, non-metaphysical, non-transcendental conception of reality? In view of the encompassing character of these three failed approaches, it would be hard not to reject any affirmative answer out of hand. For if one is not to stipulate any content, or make any immediate reference to what is, or finally determine reality in terms of some conception of knowing, what is one left with but nothing at all?

Strange as it may sound, if there is anything that can lead to a true determination of reality, it will have to be nothing: nothing that is stipulated, nothing that is real in itself, nothing that can be claimed about knowing. The experience of positive science, metaphysics and transcendental philosophy leaves this one alternative, an alternative of simply considering the empty indeterminacy one is left with, when all stipulation is ruled out and all immediate truth claims about reality and knowing have revealed their bankruptcy and been eliminated.

The figure in the history of philosophy who has raised this alternative is Hegel. Although interpreters from Schelling, Marx and Kierkegaard onward have judged and condemned him to be the last great metaphysical system-builder who conceives reality as it is in itself from an absolute standpoint of subject-object identity, there is a neglected current in Hegel's thought which actually offers a unique attempt to forgo metaphysical and transcendental arguments and instead begin philosophy without any specific preferred set of terms with regard either to method or to subject matter. With due attention to the systematic issues, his *Science of Logic* and *Encyclopaedia* can be seen to take this radically anti-foundational course, and provide the basic outline of its strategy, if not its adequate realization. Although Hegel makes many a remark that can be taken metaphysically according to standard interpretations, what makes his work so philosophically significant for advancing the present state of thought are those of his arguments which break new ground for a non-foundational theory of reality.

Hegel recognizes that when ontological and epistemological truth claims are completely discarded in virtue of their own internal untenability,⁵ what is left is an absence of all reference and referent, and not any reality or knowledge. Because there is no stipulated content, or anything in

itself, or any determination of knowing, the indeterminacy resulting from their exclusion has no internal distinctions, no relation to anything else, and no quality of any sort. It is therefore not indeterminacy *in res* or a category of some knowing, but unanalysable, undifferentiated, uncontrasted indeterminacy about which nothing specific can be said. Hegel calls this 'being' and aptly points out that, in contrast to the traditional metaphysical usage of the term, such 'being' has no ontological status, or any status as a primitive term which receives further determination through other terms or provides the privileged principle for their specification.⁶ The being in question can play no such foundational role, for it would cease to be indeterminacy if it were further qualified as a foundation of something else, be it epistemically as a category of thought or ontologically as the totality of all that is. Even if one were to take being to be merely indeterminate reality, this would still involve beginning with more than just indeterminacy. Indeed, what allows the consideration of being to escape the pitfalls of positive science, metaphysics, and transcendental philosophy is precisely the utter indeterminacy at hand, which simply can contain no stipulated content or claims about reality or knowing.

Nevertheless, it is tempting to object that any attempt to begin philosophy with being involves stipulating its specific determinacy, and in doing so, presupposes that the category of being is the privileged starting point of philosophical investigation. This objection fails to recognize that indeterminacy is not the same thing as stipulated indeterminacy or indeterminacy taken as the immediate givenness addressed by the quest for truth. If one were to begin with stipulated being, and consider it as such, what would lie at hand would be the topic with which Hegel begins his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely, sense certainty. There, what is observed is precisely knowing's stipulation of being as what is immediately given for knowing. Hegel is fully aware that such a beginning cannot qualify as the starting point of philosophy, but rather comprises the most elementary shape of consciousness, whose knowing remains burdened by reference to some in-itself which it posits as the given standard of its knowledge. By contrast, being in its own right involves no stipulated content, or any assumption concerning philosophy or reality, simply because its indeterminacy would be violated if it contained any such further relations.

Be this as it may, the very indeterminacy of being would still appear to render it a dead end for all inquiry since it seems inexplicable how anything, let alone anything real, could arise from it. Because such being can only be considered if nothing else is admitted, any further determination would have to emerge from it alone, independently of any outside reference, be it to some given method or to some given content. Otherwise, the problems attending metaphysical reference and transcendental

constitution would be reintroduced. On the other hand, since this being lacks all difference and relation to be what it is, it cannot be a ground or cause or determiner of anything, nor can it give rise to something whose own character involves difference or relation to something determinate.

Consequently, if anything were to arise from being, it could only do so in an utterly groundless manner and be just as uncontrasted and unmediated as being itself. In other words, nothing can arise from being.

Hegel recognizes that this does not mean that there can be no non-foundational development from being. Instead, it spells out the very terms of the advance, indicating that nothing does arise from being without any ground at all, that, in other words, a second indistinguishable indeterminacy follows as being's only possible successor, and does so without any cause or reason.

Being, which is neither something in itself nor a category of reason, but completely indeterminate, is *immediately* nothing, just as nothing is *immediately* the same absence of all determinacy that being comprises.⁷

Thus, instead of precluding further development, the very indeterminacy of being immediately allows the rise of a contrast that is no contrast at all, of being that is nothing and nothing that is being, where each is the groundless becoming of the other. With this passage that immediately cancels itself as a passage in so far as being and nothing are indistinguishable, being has in fact given rise to something other than itself, namely, the process of becoming within which being and nothing continually resolve themselves into one another.⁸

To the degree that this becoming is contrastable to the aspects of being and nothing contained within it, it comprises a specific determinacy which stands developed without reference to any determinate foundations. In effect, what Hegel offers in these considerations, in contrast to the foundational assumptions of metaphysical and transcendental thought, is a development of determinacy which takes no determinacy for granted.

None the less, if this emergence of becoming indicates how being can be a starting point of further determination, it does not in any way signify that anything real will result. In fact, when one simply considers the character of the advance, one sees that the development from being has a radical formality allowing of no distinction between what would be a determination *per se* as opposed to one in reality or one in thought for that matter.

Since whatever here develops does so in complete absence of all positing of a given content, all reference to reality, and any predetermined notion of what constitutes true knowing, it must follow from being in a wholly immanent manner. Instead of arising through the application of some given method or the direct introduction of what is claimed to be,

the development from being must be determined through nothing other than itself, that is it must be self-developing.

Furthermore, because such development proceeds from nothing determinate, its process cannot be a self-determination of some content, such as thought, will or reality. It must rather be self-determination *per se*. This means that the foundation-free theory of determinacy which issues from being is a theory of self-determined determinacy, with no immediate ontological or epistemological application.

Admittedly, even if the dilemmas of basing the quest for truth upon some givenness are patent enough, it is difficult to imagine how the development of self-determination would not either collapse into nothing, due to the absence of any foundation to support it, or involve a completely arbitrary, open-ended series of determinacies.

That these alternatives do not apply becomes evident once it is recognized that *what* determines itself from being can only be manifest at the conclusion of the development, for only at its end does the self-determination fully determine its subject, namely, itself, in its totality. Being is thus not the substrate of development, ever acquiring new determination for itself in the manner of fundamental ontology. On the contrary, being does not even stand as the beginning of what finally results until the very conclusion of the entire development where that of which being is a beginning first comes into view.

This signifies that the development of self-determined determinacy does in fact have a non-collapsing structure, which, however, is not immediately given, but produced through the mediation of its own self-determination. This structure is not arbitrary, for it does not issue from the arbitrariness of any given determiner. Precisely by comprising a self-development starting from nothing, it avoids all arbitrary assumptions as well as all arbitrary orderings. So, too, its self-development is not open-ended, for the unity of self-determination entails that that unity provide closure for itself.

It may be that not till the end can it be manifest what the determinations following from being are determinations of, but the character of the conclusion can still be anticipated. Since no other content or any separate knowing can be relied upon to establish the relation between the stages in the development from being or what certifies its completion, the development must itself come to a determination that presents the interconnection of all the categories and grasps them as a totality determined in and through itself. Only in this way will our exposition and reflection have no constitutive role to play in placing the different categories in relation to one another as elements of a whole.

Consequently, if the self-development is to come to any conclusion at all, this will have to comprise a final determination so structured as to relate all the preceding ones together as the specific components of the

self-determined totality which is their result as well as their encompassing unity. Hegel recognizes, however, that, as such, the last category becomes their totality itself, precisely by being the entire retrospective ordering of all that has preceded in which every category figures as a constitutive stage in the concluded self-determination containing them all and to which they have led.⁹

This resultant self-ordering whole is then the actual subject of the development following from being to which Hegel devotes his *Science of Logic*. In so far as the very totality of this resultant subject provides the ordering principle of its own developed content, it no less comprises the method by which all the categories are determined. Conversely, because it forms the ultimate subject of the development, this totality is what each and every category is a determination of. Hegel calls this categorial totality the 'Absolute Idea', and he appropriately concludes the *Science of Logic* with it, characterizing it as the method of the self-determined development of determinacy it itself comprises.¹⁰

In effect, both method and subject matter have here emerged at the end of the development, instead of being presupposed at the start in the fashion of positive science, metaphysics, and transcendental philosophy. Because such a development of categories proceeds with no primitive terms, no logical operators, and no foundations of any sort, it is genuinely self-grounding, exhibiting a self-ordered content relying on no exogenous criteria for its justification.

For just this reason, the categorial totality involves no referral of categories to anything distinguishable from them as reality, a knowing subject, or a thing-in-itself. Being, for example, is constitutively not a determination existing *in res*, or something thought as a category of reason, but simply indeterminacy without further qualification than that it retrospectively be revealed to be the component starting point in the self-determination of categorial totality. Even the categorial totality itself refers to nothing given in reality, or anything thought, but only to its own system of categories *per se*.

Consequently, what one is left with when one eliminates all positive science, metaphysics and transcendental inquiry is a development of categories more formal than any formal logic could be. For whereas formal logic proceeds by assuming certain logical operators and functions, as well as the logician in person, the categories following from being depend for their development upon no given knower or any given content, be it a methodological principle or a reference *in res*.

Although they therefore provide no conception of reality, their concluded development does leave open one possible solution to the problem, a solution which Hegel briefly sketches in moving from his *Science of Logic* to his *Philosophy of Nature*.

VI The transition from categorical totality to reality

Now we have come this far, if there is to be no return to the errors committed by positive science, metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, then the determination of reality must somehow follow from the categorical totality alone. Because the latter has so far shown itself to be the sole content to which reference can legitimately be made without recourse to presupposed foundations, any determination of reality will have to emerge immanently from the complete development of categories which Hegel calls the Absolute Idea.

If one were, for instance, to undertake a 'logic of discovery' where one turns to what is given to one and conceives reality by finding the categories as they are there purportedly embodied, then the dilemma of metaphysical reference would reassert itself. Once again, one would be assuming the correspondence of categories and reality, while making immediate truth claims for which any adjudication would be excluded from the start.

To avoid this trap by following an immanent development from categorical totality does not mean, however, that reality is to be conceived as something determined by categorical totality. Although at one point Hegel himself lapses into characterizing the Absolute Idea as God before Creation,¹¹ giving much-cited fuel to metaphysical ministerpretations, his whole argument runs counter to any such suggestion that categorical totality be thought of as the determiner of reality. If this be done, the system of categories gets illicitly assigned a primacy foreign to its own special unconstrasted formality. Instead of being taken as the *self*-determined whole it is, categorical totality would here be made the determiner of something other than itself. As such, it would effectively become a transcendental structure contrasted to 'reality' as a positor stands related to what it posits. With this the case, one falls back into the dilemmas of transcendental argument, where 'reality' can no more escape being a solipsist construction than the constitution of reality in terms of the categories can escape being a subjective positing.

What saves an immanent transition beyond categorical totality from all these problems are the two sides of self-determination already revealed through the concluded development from being.

On the one hand, if categorical totality were to develop immanently into reality, this would involve no immediate reference to anything in itself. The transition would be made entirely on the basis of what categorical totality itself comprises, without any outside intervention. Consequently, the problem of metaphysics would not arise.

On the other hand, what results from immanent development is not determined by what it arises from. On the contrary, a fully independent development is a self-determination, and what determines itself is not

already given at the start, but only comes to be at the end as the result. Thus, if reality emerges immanently from categorial totality, the actual subject of the self-development will not be the system of categories, but rather the completely determined reality. As a result of the development, reality will be what has actually determined itself in the process, whereas categorial totality will stand not as reality's determiner or as God before creation, but as the component starting point from which the determinacy of reality develops itself. Only in this way will reality be as free of foundations as the theory which conceives it. Furthermore, the relation of categorial totality and reality cannot be based upon our reflection, but must be made within the development itself at the point it achieves its final and full totality.

On these terms, the possibility of a non-positive, non-metaphysical and non-transcendental conception of reality lies open. Given the nature of the problem, the first task is determining how categorial totality can result immanently in something which is other than itself and which actually is.

To begin with, what emerges from categorial totality must be irreducible to all and any of its constitutive categories. Otherwise it will simply fall back within categorial totality as a purely formal determination. Irreducibility must be achieved, however, without any introduction of stipulations, immediate references to reality or acts of knowing. Because all there is is categorial totality itself, the only otherness that could possibly emerge would have to be a pure other of categorial totality, pure in that it would refer to nothing else and nevertheless would rely on the content of categorial totality for its otherness. Furthermore, this pure other would have to be such as a self-development from categorial totality. Otherwise the required immanence would be broken.

The only way all these conditions can be met is if categorial totality develop into what is its own content external to itself. If what emerges be, in other words, the entirety of categorial totality related to itself as something given, then one will have what is specifically other to categorial totality, without entailing either a return to any particular categories or an illicit introduction of extraneous content.

At the very end of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel offers this insight, and observes that just such a transition immediately occurs once categorial totality itself emerges as the concluding determination of the development from being.¹² To be concluding, this final category is itself a retrospective ordering of all preceding ones as component stages in the development of the whole which incorporates them all by determining itself through them. Thus, the moment categorial totality arises, the entire development stands as something given to it, presenting it as something that has run its course, been achieved, and thus come into being. In other words, as soon as it has developed, categorial totality stands external to itself. Consequently, what one has is no longer categorial totality in all its

radical formality, but rather the self-externality of categorial totality, or the self-externality of the Idea, to use Hegel's expression.¹³

Although this new structure incorporates nothing but the determinations of categorial totality, it does so as something given, and not in a manner which is itself a category, as was the case with the purely formal ordering comprising the concluding category of the system of categories. As a result, for the first time there is not just determinacy without further qualification, but a given determinacy. The latter is given not to some presupposed structure of knowing, but rather to the groundless, presuppositionless totality of determinacy it contains within itself as its structural element. Since such given determinacy is neither stipulated, nor metaphysically referred to, nor transcendently constituted, it provides a reality free of the dilemmas confronting all past candidates for what is.

Needless to say, the self-externality of categorial totality does not exhaust the determination of reality, but at best supplies the minimal threshold of given determinacy required for any further real structure. Hegel accordingly characterizes it as the most rudimentary and immediate content of natural givenness, which all others must presuppose and incorporate.¹⁴ What reality as a whole actually is must await the completion of a further development which can only arise out of reality's initial specification as the self-externality of categorial totality.

With all external stipulation still excluded, the real can come to its full determination only on the basis of self-development. Its self-determining process, however, like self determination *per se*, can only reach a conclusion by arriving at a final determination relating all those that precede as elements in the development of the whole. Just as the development from being had to arrive at its own method to achieve closure, so the development from the self-externality of categorial totality must reach a real determination providing that ordering principle for all reality which allows it to seal its own totality.

If we are to follow Hegel's indications,¹⁵ such a consummating entity would seem to be nothing other than philosophy itself, taken as the real phenomenon it is appearing in the world with a history of its own. It could provide the element within reality determining how all structures of givenness are constitutive components in the self-determined totality of the real. In so doing, philosophy would not only allow reality to achieve totality by determining itself as a whole independently of anything else. Philosophy would further secure the truth of the conception of reality which must be distinguished from what reality is itself.

This would be accomplished on two fronts, both of which are internal to reality's own development, as they would have to be, if external stipulations were to be avoided.

On the one hand, the completed determination of reality would establish the full relation between categories *per se* and real determinations.

This would happen not simply because the concluded development of reality would provide what is to be contrasted to categories, but rather because reality would make the contrast itself. Since the development from being to categorial totality would proceed no less immanently to a self-development from categorial totality to the whole of reality, there would actually be one continuous self-determination which runs from being through to the summit of reality. Consequently, at the very end of all this, the actual subject of the entire self-determination would first stand complete and show itself to be that totality of reality made manifest with philosophy's appearance.

On this basis, then, the entire sphere of categories would no longer be just an uncontrasted whole proceeding from being, but a categorial totality which figures as the component element for the minimal structure of the real. The application of the categories within the determination of reality would here lie established entirely in virtue of reality's own development, rather than in virtue of some given foundation. Hegel, who calls the totality of reality 'spirit', suggests as much by arguing that the Idea is spirit in itself, that is to say, spirit implicit, in so far as spirit's self-determination incorporates the categorial totality of the Idea as the basic element of all its real aspects.¹⁶

As Hegel recognizes, what would permit knowledge of this relation between reality and categorial determinacy without recourse to a transcendent standpoint is the role philosophy would play as reality's own comprehending component. In virtue of the retrospective ordering achieved by a philosophical thought unencumbered by ontological or epistemological assumptions, the relation of reality to categorial determinacy, which lies within the self-determination of reality, would also be conceived as such within that same self-determination. Through this real act of foundation-free philosophy, the non-positive, non-metaphysical, non-transcendental conception of reality would then secure truth for itself, not by presupposing the correspondence of thought and reality, but by arriving at it, no less in reality than in thought, as the final result of its labour. Without any immediate reference to reality, or any transcendental grounding of its knowledge, philosophy would here conceive reality as containing its own philosophical activity. In so doing, philosophy would conceive its own conceptions in distinction from both categories *per se* and reality as a whole, while grasping the unitary process in which all are bound together.

If this opens the possibility of a true knowing of what is, that must still remain only a possibility until the full development leading to this point has actually been given. No stipulated anticipatory schema can substitute for the immanent determining at issue.

Consequently, the strategy Hegel has offered for conceiving reality without metaphysical or transcendental arguments requires nothing less

than first showing in full detail how indeterminacy does in fact give rise to a development leading to categorial totality. Once this be accomplished a complete account must follow of how categorial totality, with all its now unfolded content, freely releases itself into self-externality. Lastly, one must establish how the given determinacy of this result leads to a self-determination of reality that achieves totality with a final self-ordering element of its own.

Although Hegel has addressed all three of these tasks at great length, the results of his efforts have not been systematically evaluated. So long as that remains the case, and if not other attempts be made to fulfil these tasks, true knowledge of reality will be but a programme for philosophy without foundations.

Notes

1 See Willard Van Orman Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in *From A Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) for a classic statement of this position.

2 In the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel makes these arguments, without there taking up the other alternative notion of knowing as a structure of referring whose act generates its own referent.

3 This self-elimination of transcendental cognition is precisely what Hegel observes phenomenologically in the chapter entitled 'Absolute Knowing' in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. As I have tried to show in 'The Route to Foundation-Free Systematic Philosophy' (*The Philosophical Forum*, 15, 3 (Spring 1984)), this final collapse of the foundational quest for knowledge of consciousness leads directly to the starting point of the *Science of Logic*.

4 See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translation edited by G. Barden and J. Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1981); Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

5 Hegel attempts to document their internal collapse in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In 'The Route to Foundation-Free Systematic Philosophy', I have tried to show how Hegel can present this self-elimination of metaphysical and transcendental discourse without making truth claims of his own.

6 G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 83f.

7 *ibid.*, p. 82.

8 *ibid.*, pp. 82–3.

9 *ibid.*, pp. 824–5.

10 *ibid.*, p. 825.

11 *ibid.*, p. 50.

12 *ibid.*, p. 843.

13 *ibid.*, p. 843; G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), paragraph 247.

14 Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, paragraph 254.

15 G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Spirit*, translated by William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), paragraphs 574–7.

16 *ibid.*, paragraphs 381, 575–7.

Hegel's system as the theory and practice of interpretation

H. S. Harris

'Das was ist zu begreifen ist die Aufgabe der Philosophie, denn das, was ist, ist die Vernunft. Was das Individuum betrifft, so ist ohnehin jedes ein Sohn seiner Zeit; so ist auch die Philosophie, ihre Zeit in Gedanken erfasst' ['To comprehend what is, that is the task of philosophy, because what is, is Reason. Whatever may befall an individual, everyone is in any case a child of his time; and so philosophy too is its time apprehended in thoughts.']¹ So wrote Hegel in what we can fairly call the most notorious of his public manifestos – the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*.

In case one is tempted to think that this pronouncement was not only determined, but dialectically limited by its immediate occasion and context, this suspicion can soon be put to flight. Determined by the practical context of Berlin political life, the statement certainly is; for the partisan polemical character of the Preface as a whole is evident on its face, even when we do not know enough about the immediate circumstances (as I confess I do not) to say who the targets of the invective were, or just what criticisms of the existing political system they wished to base upon just what utopian ideals. But the Preface itself goes on to speak of philosophy making its first appearance as the thought of the actual world 'after actuality has completed its process of formation and has made itself ready'. This refers us to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), in which the completion of that *Bildungsprozess* was analysed and demonstrated. The *Phenomenology* was the comprehension of Hegel's own time as ready for the appearance of philosophy as the 'thought of the world'; his 'real philosophy' (i.e. the Philosophy of Nature and of Spirit) is the actual 'thought of the world', or in other words Hegel's 'real philosophy' is precisely 'its own time comprehended in thoughts'. In other words, whether we think the job has been done well or ill, that is what Hegel's 'real philosophy' attempts. What the Hegelian Logic is, by this criterion, is harder to state. For although the proposition

that 'philosophy is its own time comprehended in thoughts' belongs to *its* time, in the sense that it could not have been convincingly uttered at any *previous* time, it does not *simply* belong to its time (just as it is not simply determined by the polemical context of the immediate occasion). For one thing, the proposition purports to give us the key by which we can interpret all the earlier philosophies, which lacked this explicit consciousness of what they were; and if the key does work – i.e. if we find that what earlier times recognize as the true philosophy can actually be understood in this way, and that this principle explains why philosophical doctrines were advanced and accepted – then we have to admit that the proposition is valid not just for *its* time, but for *our* time (and for all other times that can count for us as 'possible'). In other words, this proposition is not any longer *philosophia*; it is *sophia* or wisdom.

If that is granted, then we must ask how much of the Hegelian logic this piece of true wisdom draws after it into the realm of 'absolute' knowledge. We should notice that, in this perspective, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* itself is an *absolute* achievement. No one can ever comprehend the ripeness of the time again in the way that Hegel did, just as no one can ever repeat Freud's achievement of establishing psychoanalysis as a science (of *some* kind) through self-analysis. But achievements of this kind are *historically* eternal, or eternally historical. The 'science of the experience of consciousness' is an indissoluble melding of speculative (or dialectical) 'logic' with 'real philosophy'. Even to read the book with understanding we must know the history of the 'German-Christian world'; and whatever else we may know about it, we must do our best to understand that world in the way that Hegel knew it. Also we must know as much as we can about the actual world of the Revolution and Napoleon in its German (or perhaps I should say rather, its Swabian) perspective.

Even when we do manage to comprehend it, however, the 'science of experience' is only the critical introduction to *logical science as such*. In the Hegelian Logic, philosophy becomes 'the thought of the world' in its *eternal* aspect, the *sophia* of the older tradition of speculative theology. Hegel is true to his vocation as the philosophical apostle to the Germans, therefore, when he speaks of the *Science of Logic* as 'the displaying of God as he is in his own eternal essence, before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit'.² Logic, in other words, is not what God *thinks* (as if thinking were an 'attribute' of his). Rather, it is what he *is*. It is certainly correct to say that the science of logic is the *thinking* that God *is* – for Hegel's immediate aversion at this point to the doctrine of the cosmic *Nous* in Anaxagoras points mediately to the Aristotelian definition of God as *noesis noeseos*. But the content of this thinking is also something that can be 'displayed' (*dargestellt*), in a German vocabulary consisting of the most ordinary and familiar words, between the covers of a logic book. It can even be condensed and simplified into a manual which

earnest – and sometimes perhaps not so earnest – students can study and learn in the way in which their medieval forebears learned the *logica vetus et nova* of Aristotle.

The implicit miracle of this is as starkly incomprehensible as the mystery of transsubstantiation, which has always continued to be a conceptual battleground for thinking Christians. In Hegel's view indeed it is the very same mystery or miracle. How can the power and goodness, the harshness and the love, that creates and sustains our whole world be 'displayed' in formulas that can be recited by rote? Is this not exactly what Luther *protested* against in the activity of John Tetzel and the other merchants of divine indulgence? A mouse cannot profane this Hegelian mystery, but any idle language-user can. To see the paradox of Hegel's *Logic* in terms of this religious analogy – and in terms of the very moment which Hegel regarded as its *thoughtful* origin – is to understand why the general reaction against the pretensions of the Hegelian 'science' has been so clear and categorical. The 'objectivity' of the content is clearly what justifies Hegel's striving for simplification and formal rigour. But how can the work of an educator who began by fervently agreeing with Lessing's *Nathan* that one cannot put truth into one's mind like the minted coins in one's pocket have ended like this?

It is the striving after the formulaic simplicity of a dogmatic creed or *symbolum* which shows that Hegel believed that 'logic' as a whole was in principle distinct or distinguishable from 'real philosophy'; and the basis of the distinction can only be that properly logical principles are valid for all times, and for all interpretative situations. But how can we be sure which principles have this absolute validity? Does not the recognition that philosophy is its *own time* comprehended, that everyone is a child of his own time, and that anyone, anywhere, at any time, can readily establish the impossibility of 'jumping over Rhodes', entail the adoption of a sceptical attitude about the separation of 'logic' from 'experience'? Either Hegel thought not, or else the distinction between formal and material principles of interpretation, between 'logic' and 'real philosophy', is not the simple opposition of the eternal and the temporal, the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. Or perhaps both alternatives are true at once – and that, I believe, is the right answer.

There must be more to absolute wisdom than the simple proposition that 'the love of wisdom produces an effort to comprehend one's own time in a thought pattern which the time can recognize as its own'. For if that were all, then Hegel's logic would just be the abstracting of our thought pattern from the concrete comprehension of the real world; in that case our logic would be as time-bound as our real world, and theological talk about its displaying God outside of time and the finite world would make no sense. But we ought to take note that Hegel's *Logic* is itself a ladder. It need not all of it be *absolute* in the same way

(just as the concrete *Gestalten* of the *Phenomenology* were not all *present* in the same way in the comprehended European cultural world of 1807).

Hegel's theologically minded early American readers – I shall confine my attention to them for reasons that will soon become apparent – either simply ignored the problem of how Hegel had somehow jumped over Rhodes, or perhaps admitted, in their secret hearts, that he couldn't and and hadn't done so. But they were very much aware of the ladder aspect of his *Logic*. They saw it as an ordered *development* of the concept of God from 'Pure Being' to 'Absolute Self-knowing'. But upon this view of it they could not understand why the final chapter on 'The Absolute Idea' took the form of a discussion of the method of *human* scientific cognition. Thus we find W. T. Harris declaring – after struggling with the *Science of Logic* for more than thirty years – that Hegel has misled us (and not for the first time!)

as to the nature of the first principle to which he has arrived as the final result of his logic. Glancing at the discussions under absolute idea, one might naturally suppose that we had arrived only at correct formal views about method and the dialectic treatment of the topics of a science. We have learned perhaps how to compose a work on philosophy! . . . Hegel has bent his followers in this formal direction and thus well-nigh ruined the influence of his philosophic school for a time.³

Of course what W. T. Harris calls 'an occasion for misunderstanding' here arises from his own conviction that Hegel *cannot* mean what he says at the end of the book, because of what he said at the beginning. But in choosing which affirmation to use as the measure for the other we should be guided by the title of the book. The dialectical *method* is what Hegel claims *must* be accorded the status of absolute knowledge. This is what 'comprehension' depends on, or what it reveals itself to be when philosophy becomes wisdom by appearing as 'the thought of the world'. Unless we trust the dialectic method, this *appearance* of wisdom is just one phenomenon among others with no right to claim the status of absolute truth. So this final chapter of the *Logic* must have the same absolute status as the proposition that 'philosophy is its own time apprehended in thoughts'.

What goes for the end of the *Logic* goes for the beginning also. That Hegel believed this is evident from his agonized concern about 'the beginning of science'. His concern in this case is only the result of his recognition that the 'beginning' must be *absolutely* determinable if the concept of 'absolute knowing' which he had so laboriously established in the *Phenomenology* is a meaningful 'appearance' at all. The real problem about 'the beginning of science' is precisely to say what the final philo-

sophically self-conscious appearing of Spirit *means* (in its 'simplicity' or 'immediacy').

The answer Hegel gives – reduced to plain ordinary language – is that the appearing of Spirit means that the most primitive and universal concept of human understanding is a contradiction – the identity of Being with Nothing, or of Nothing with Being. If we *can* find a viable application of this doctrine, an 'appearing' that 'satisfies' it, we have at least the certainty that (in terms of formal logical structure) it commits us to nothing. This is just what is awkward, for it seems to mean that 'absolute knowing' is the knowing of nothing – or in other words, it is the sceptical commitment to absolute ignorance (or objectively to the admission that there is nothing 'absolute' to be known).

This was the stumbling block that caused the fragmentation of Hegel's school, together with all the sermons and satires about 'the secret of Hegel'. To suppose that we are logically entitled to go anywhere in the light of this absolute appearance seemed absurd. Rather (as the critics of this new dialectic said) it was true that the dialectic is a licence to go anywhere that one's illogical fancy suggests, because all genuine logic has been overthrown.

What happened was that those who thought of themselves as 'following' Hegel found themselves at a place where three ways met, and went in opposite directions. Or one might say that the true followers stood still and babbled (turning the 'real philosophy' and even the 'logic' into a sort of *variorum* edition).⁴ The conscious choice of a way forward was the moment where the interpreter ceased to be a 'follower' and sought to decide 'what is living and what is dead in the philosophy of Hegel'. On the one hand one could retreat from the speculative impasse of the life of God *displayed* as contradiction to the theological matrix which brought this absolution (or dissolution) of Reason to birth; on the other hand one could retreat from the spiritual standpoint altogether, and let the Hegelian 'Reason' operate consciously as 'Understanding'.

To make the first choice was to turn 'Reason' back into 'Faith'. This was what many so-called 'neo-Hegelians' of the Anglo-Saxon world did. Most of them knew, and said, that they were not Hegelians at all. Our perspective upon them (and upon Hegel) has now become sufficiently historical for us to see how correct they were. But all the same, what they were doing presupposed Hegel, and would have been inconceivable without him. Thus, Josiah Royce (who was, in my view, the greatest of them and the closest to Hegel) moved from a sceptical phenomenalism to what he called 'absolute pragmatism' through a life-long effort to make the Hegelian panorama of Absolute Spirit into the grounding for a Kantian rational faith. In his view of the task of philosophy, he was always closer to Fichte than to Hegel; he rejected the dialectic of contradiction, and adopted the new logic of the mathematical infinite for the conceptual-

ization of his transfinite Absolute. But he lived in the intellectual climate that Darwin's *Origin of Species* created; and the ever-powerful influence of Peirce's pragmatism caused him to take the comprehension of time seriously. His ontological commitments should have obliged him to say, with McTaggart, that in the perspective of the Absolute 'time is unreal'. But Darwin, Peirce, and Hegel's *Phenomenology* somehow came together in his last and greatest work, *The Problem of Christianity*, to produce the definition of philosophy as interpretation, and of the philosopher as the interpreter. The proper (i.e. the Hegelian) *Aufhebung* of the opposition between time and eternity is implicit in this insight. How far Royce had begun to be aware of the implications by 1914 I do not think we shall ever be able to say. (Certainly I shall not, for when I read his work my own prejudices drag me beyond his words like wild horses bolting. But no one will move me from the view that Royce is a better Hegelian than McTaggart – whose own work was clearly inspired by the determination to separate the 'true' speculative logic of 'eternity' from the 'false' historical phenomenology in Hegel.) What Royce believed in 1914 matters little in any case, since by then he was already failing in body and in mind; and the collapse of his cultural world drew him back to the Cave, and highlighted the moral prejudices that are usually only the *implicit* determinants of a philosophy which conceives itself to be rational faith. Philosophy ought not to be about 'God' (if God is an existing consciousness in his own right) because that *real* God is always *on our side*. Hegel's doctrine of the 'cunning of Reason' was the unmasking of this delusion.

Not only God, but even his opposite, Matter, turns into the practical ally of the supposed truth, as those who chose the other fork in the road demonstrated. The leftward fork, when it became a choice between the living and the dead, was a retreat from Reason to Understanding.⁵ The struggle of scientific enlightenment against superstition was pressed to a conclusion through the acceptance of Hegel's logical method and the rejection of its supposedly theological content. The Absolute Knower who transcends our finite Reason was replaced by an absolute Object of Knowledge which transcends our finite Understanding. But just as the faithful knew that God was on their side, so the enlightened knew that Science was on theirs. The ideal of a rational comprehension that transcends 'sides' altogether was lost. What William James called the 'block Universe' as an anti-Hegelian critic of one side was denounced by the enlightened themselves as 'ideological mystification' on the other. But the middle way opened by the conception of philosophy as the logical methodology for the comprehension of one's own time in thought was lost.

Almost lost, but not quite. For out of a mathematical and scientific background there came a student of Kant and of Schiller's *Aesthetic*

Letters with his mind set upon the problem from which Hegel's *Logic* arose: the logical development of a system of *categories* which could be shown to be necessary and sufficient for the scientific comprehension of experience. Charles Peirce was unimpressed by Hegel's method (which he regarded as a technique of mystification).⁶ But he appreciated what Hegel was trying to do, and spent 'the two most passionately laborious years' of his life trying to do it better. Then he published a 'new list of categories' (1867). This was a short list containing the single triad, Quality, Relation and Representation. The contrast between Peirce and Hegel is patent. For the logical movement of Hegel's *Begriff* takes place completely above the level of 'representation'. This much is true, however we interpret the difference between Peirce's 'representation' and Hegel's *Vorstellung*. So it was reasonable for Peirce to write to W. T. Harris a few months after publishing his 'new list': 'I admit there is music in the logic of Hegel, but that is all I discover there.'⁷ He did not yet see how close his dialogical conception of reason was to Hegel's because the systematic expositors of Hegel's *Logic* (including Hegel himself) made so much of the great gulf between Understanding and Reason – and Peirce knew very clearly which side of that divide he was on.

But in its application to the comprehension of the time – i.e. in the Philosophy of Spirit, both propaedeutic (the *Phenomenology*) and systematic (*Philosophie des Geistes stricto sensu*) the evolution of the *Begriff* is completely embodied in 'representations'. That the movement of the dialectic is dialogical is not claimed by Hegel; but the very concept of Spirit is explicitly declared to be a dialogue in the *Phenomenology*. If we apply this thesis to the dialectic of the *Logic* (or even to that of the *Phenomenology*), it does indeed appear that the reference must be to a superhuman dialogue, because the transitions are not like the course of an ordinary human conversation or the events of ordinary experience. We forget that in following the 'biography of God' we are ourselves in a dialogue with the book (even though this is dramatized and continually forced to our notice in the *Phenomenology* by the contrast between the observing subject and the observed object consciousness).

When Peirce finally did discover that Hegel had written another 'logic' book at the level of *representation*, his attitude to Hegel changed dramatically. The articles of 1868 that contained his theory of consciousness as an interpretative continuum appear to have been written without any real study of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and there is no evidence that he paid serious attention to the analysis and partial translation that Harris published in the same issues of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.⁸ Apparently Peirce did not appreciate the relation between Hegel's *Phenomenology* and his *Logic* until he read W. T. Harris' book when it appeared in 1890. His general thesis in 1868, that 'man is a sign' (*Writings* II, 240–1) – which seems to me to be the only coherent interpretation of the

Hegelian doctrine of the 'concrete universal' – was apparently developed without any clear awareness of its Hegelian origins.⁹ But once he had begun to study it, the *Phenomenology* became for Peirce 'Hegel's greatest masterpiece' (1900) and 'a work . . . perhaps the most profound ever written' (1903)¹⁰ – a judgment with which I am only too happy to concur. Anyone who has studied the papers of 1868 (as Royce was led to do when he was writing *The Problem of Christianity*) will understand why the Kantian enthusiast who wrote in 1865 that 'perhaps the strongest point of Hegelianism is the purely impersonal character which it attributes to the unity of apperception. In this respect I follow Hegel; but I do so without budging from the critical standpoint' (*Writings*, I, 256) found it possible to budge so far. Of course, Peirce had also *not* budged, since the precise object of the *Phenomenology* is to budge the 'critical standpoint' itself (or to set it in motion towards that 'COMMUNITY without definite limits' of which Peirce spoke in 1868 (*Writings*, I, 239)).

Just as Royce had a right (which Peirce acknowledged) to call himself an 'absolute pragmatist', so Peirce – who considered Royce to be a Hegelian and called him 'the greatest of living metaphysicians' – can with justice be called not merely America's *best* Hegelian, but her *only* real one. For he – and he alone – really was consciously trying to achieve what Hegel had aimed at, and to do it better. There is even the same *apparent* hiatus in their work between the concrete continuum of human experience as an unending process of interpretation and the abstract theory of the logic of science. Peirce concluded after forty years that the 'longer list of categories' which he had been so long in search of was incompletable; and if the beginning of Hegel's *Logic* is indeed the key to that 'life in Signs' ('Minute Logic', 1902, *Collected Papers*, 2.111) which Peirce recognized Hegel's 'objective logic' to be about, then this conclusion is correct.¹¹ If the 'life of signs' is rooted in the self-founding *freedom* of the 'man-sign' (as Gentile was to argue later on the basis of Spaventa's study of the beginning of the *Logic*), then the project of a comprehensive theoretical science of all the possible systems of sign-making is indeed incompletable. To put the point in Peirce's language: apart from that first short list, semiotics is an empirical rather than a philosophical science. In Hegelian terms *signs* are the work of the Understanding, and are the subject matter of *applied* logic or 'real philosophy'; and as the philosophical comprehension of its time, real philosophy is (and knows itself to be) valid *for* its time – including the past of that time, of course – but not for the time to come.

The distinction between the short list of categories, which Peirce found (and continually refined as his Aristotelian investigation of the modes and aspects of signification advanced), and the longer list, which he could not find, represents the division between Understanding and Reason. But that is not to say that Peirce's 'short list' – which he eventually acknowl-

edged to be closely akin to the Hegelian 'stages' of thought (i.e. Being, Essence and Concept) – is all that is permanently valid in Hegel's *Logic*. Hegel himself recognized the 'bad infinity' of the logical starting point which Gentile so accurately designated as *pensiero pensante*. In Hegel's famous admission that the method he follows is 'still capable of much perfecting, of much elaboration in detail',¹² we can recognize the same yearning for final comprehensiveness that powered Peirce's forty-year quest. Yet this elaboration in 1831 of the simple statement in 1812 that 'the method . . . is still capable of much perfecting' is in contrast with what Hegel actually strove for in the interim.

It is noteworthy that between 1816 and 1831 Hegel did not labour upon the further elaboration of which he speaks. Instead he worked on *simplification*. The external reason for this was of course pedagogical: the drive towards simplification began in the Gymnasium at Nuremburg, while Hegel was still working on the most elaborate version of his *Logic* that he ever did contrive. But this practical motivation expresses a necessity implicit in logical science itself of which Hegel was fully conscious. For the Hegelian science of logic has two aspects; it is the 'first' science which is also the 'last' science.

Philosophical logic is what one must learn first, when one reaches the maturity of practical *Bildung* where one is acknowledged to be capable of 'behaving oneself'; but at that stage it is dry, abstract and empty. The *life* of the signs is not evident: they are mechanical symbols – for the Understanding is the *Ding* that Reason *is*. This *Ding* can never become a machine – though it has now increased its power in ways that are still not adequately comprehended by objectifying itself in machines. But it is machine-like: its *ideal* is to be a machine. The human urge towards divine power which Sartre called a 'passion inutile' is perilous precisely because *inutile* is not the word for it. But in the *Bildung* of the scientific community the peril must be recognized without fear (or exaltation) and without the moral imperatives that those emotions call forth. The power of mathematical logic – which mesmerized Royce – is the *empty* extreme. The freedom of thinking wants rather to be rich in *meaning* (not perfect in its formal infinity).

What gives the signs of logic their 'life' is their interpretative use. In this aspect logic becomes the last of the sciences. Hence we find Hegel saying that 'the value of logic is only appreciated when it has turned into the result of the experience of the sciences'.¹³ If it is to fulfil this destiny, the logic taught to our ethically independent beginners must obviously be elaborate enough to prepare them for the comprehension of the actual science of the world they belong to. But also they need enough *phenomenological* science to comprehend the actual life of the world in which they are to become responsible agents. For one does not learn, in the speculative logic of the human and natural sciences, how to compre-

hend the manifestations of the human will, or why conflicts are inevitable in practical life. The pathway to philosophical science (as the standpoint that is beyond *all* judgments, even the Last one) has to be taught to every generation.¹⁴ The two logics, the comprehension of time and of historical motion that brings us to Reason and the logic of the eternal return of Reason to itself, are equally essential.

Hegel himself gave up the effort to simplify the *Phenomenology*; and probably the effort to unify the foundations of our existing body of sciences is now beyond the capacity of any one mind. But the grounding that scientifically prepared minds need in order to comprehend their world and their place in it – the basic theory of selfhood (first as emergent from nature, both mechanical and energetic; and second as self-founding in the social institutions of rational communication) – was what Hegel strove to supply in his *Logic*. That minimum can ideally be elaborated to the point where every *logical* concept employed in the theoretical interpretation of the world in the communally recognized science of the time has been brought forth. But since science as inquiry is a *phenomenon* – i.e. it moves in time – there cannot be a *theoretical maximum* for the extension of speculative logic in this way; and Hegel's repeated affirmation that the method of his logical science is the 'only true one' and that as a logical form the absolute Idea is just this *method* (whose moments are Being, Reflection and Concept) confirms his agreement with Peirce that the short list is the theoretical minimum.

One remark in his Introduction to the *Science of Logic* does suggest, however, that the minimum might be expressed more theoretically, and that there may be a reliable way of distinguishing what belongs to theoretical logic from what belongs to its application:

He who has mastered a language, and is acquainted with other languages for comparison with it, to him can the spirit and the formation of a people first show itself expressed in the grammar of its speech . . . and last of all he can be cognizant through the grammar of the expression of spirit generally, i.e. of logic.¹⁵

I do not know if it was the memory of this passage which caused Peirce to suggest that Hegel's *Logic* was a treatise on the German language.¹⁶ But to me it indicates that in *our* cultural world Hegel would have agreed that philosophical logic should be materially based upon and guided by comparative linguistics. The Hegelian 'science of logic' could perhaps be something as different from the Encyclopaedic 'logic for beginners' as the 'foundations of mathematics' is from the learning of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

But no matter how far the science of logic may diverge from the way that one presents logic to philosophical beginners, no matter how much

logical algebra, or how many computer programs, it may incorporate, the beginning will still be from the contradictoriness of pure being and the climax must be the three-stage logical structure of rational inquiry. Consequently the method is bound to be dialectical in some sense. This can be intuited, though not in any formal sense proved, at the highest level of concreteness and of abstraction – in the organization of the human sciences. I myself take it to be intuitively clear that a sociology founded upon primitive concepts derived from economics *cannot* be made directly coherent with one founded on the primitive concepts of 'depth psychology' (or some subset of the plethora of concepts employed by clinical psychiatrists). If that does not seem to some of my readers to be at all obvious then we can move to the same conflict within psychology itself, and ask whether the experimental study of how the animal organism functions (behavioural psychology for short) is likely to be directly integrated with the psychological study of the relation of conscious and unconscious in language users. Those who are still undismayed at the prospect of *this* integrative task must be asked to contemplate the question whether zoology (as the study of the whole organism) will ever be directly integrated with biochemistry; and finally whether physics itself can ever recover the state of simple consistency that it had in Newton's *Principia*: for the paradigm of what I am calling 'direct integration' is the integration that Newton achieved between the motion of the apple and the motion of the Moon. The two physical concepts of 'force' and 'light', which were the fields of Newton's greatest triumphs, are the very ones which have developed a dialectical character, which scientific theorizing accepts – at least for the present – as fundamental.

I cannot say – and according to my view of the starting point of the *Science of Logic*, it is a necessary truth that nobody will ever be able to say – that this situation is permanent. There is room, on my view, for Peirce's resolute commitment to the standpoint of the Understanding. The only seeming prophecy that I believe I am logically committed to is that if the scientific Understanding ever achieves its ideal of a single coherent web of theory with no explicitly admitted *apparent* contradictions (such as the 'complementary' conception of light as waves and as particles), then Understanding will itself have changed its character (in a way for which Hegel's doctrine of 'absolute reflection', or the self-inversion of reflection into Reason, will then be seen as anticipatory). This is a prediction so weak and indefinite that I believe it commits me to nothing (and so does not violate Hegel's explicit doctrine that philosophy knows no future). It is silly, in my view, to speculate about whether, in that event, Hegel's 'knowledge' that this is the 'only true method' would turn out to be superannuated. But those who hold, on the contrary, that such speculations are useful can be sure of my blessing, since they will have to study Hegel's method and its applications long

and hard in order to make any properly significant statements about this problematically real question. I myself believe, of course, that any such study would certainly be useful, since it seems clear to me that the dialectical method is (and will be) useful to the systematization of scientific theory for the foreseeable future. That the category of 'utility' (rather than 'truth') is what applies to the future I take to be the truth of pragmatism; and in accepting that thesis I do not see myself as violating any canon of Hegel's doctrine of philosophy as 'the thought of the world'. (I take that expression in its turn to signify the speculative 'result' of a 'comprehension of *its own time* in thoughts' which is the phenomenological preparation for it, or the process of its coming into being.)

Hegel's Logic, therefore, if we see it in the light in which his own easily intelligible statements show that he saw it, is both an eternal result and an eternally self-transforming process. Peirce's 'short list' isolated the 'result' (but his continuing effort to improve the formulation of what he regarded as his first major contribution to philosophy shows how impossible it is to isolate the result from the process in any final sense). Hegel was certainly aware of this. It is the first theme of the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, and the fact that the 'result' of logic is precisely logical *method* is the most adequate way of exhibiting the logical 'necessity' of that opening thesis. Another 'result' is that logical science itself moves in a circle (since this culmination is what interprets and justifies the logically paradoxical beginning). But Hegel does not make that circle explicit. The circle that interests him, instead, is the one made by logical science and 'real philosophy' as its interpretative application. As I have argued, the 'elaboration' of which Hegel believed logic to be capable refers to the possibility of a logical system of all the scientific concepts of the time. But this system can only be logically 'divided' and displayed after it has first been 'collected'. One has to know science in order to do logic; and equally one must know logic in order to recognize what can count as science. This is a paradox that resolves itself as one goes. Empirically one has to know science first (i.e. what is recognized to be, or counts as, science in the world in which one historically comes to consciousness). Logically, this is because Understanding is the first moment of Reason. But the birth of Reason proper is the 'absolute reflection' of Understanding upon itself, its grasp of the logical implications and presuppositions of what it is doing; and this transition, of course, is itself *dialectical* – at least at the socio-historical level.

Thus far, I have deliberately avoided the word 'hermeneutics'. I have not needed it, and as a matter of simple biographical fact, I did not encounter it in any philosophical context until after I had acquired all of the conceptual tools that I have employed in formulating the interpretation of the Hegelian system that I have sketched. Nevertheless what I have been doing is what I would myself call (now that I have belatedly

acquired the concept – for at first I did not acquire it: I simply resisted it for reasons that should become obvious) ‘Hegelian hermeneutics’. It is not a science but an ‘art’. I learned from Royce to think of philosophy as absolute interpretation, and of the philosopher as the community’s ‘interpreter’. An interpreter is what I am, and what I shall certainly remain as long as I continue to be capable of useful intellectual effort. But philosophy proper, the pure *science* of interpretation, or logic, as I have learned to understand it from Hegel, that I do not do; and hence I am not really a philosopher. What I practise is properly described as the *art* of philosophical hermeneutics; and *no one* who does hermeneutics is really a philosopher. Since the object of my hermeneutic efforts is to make *philosophy* visible, I do not use the word ‘hermeneutics’, because the people who do use it think ‘hermeneutics’ is philosophy. Philosophy itself (as a *science*) is *not* visible to those who think of ‘hermeneutics’ as philosophy.

‘Hermeneutics’ – as the process by which those skilled in it could make plain the meaning of God’s word for their community which recognized it as holy – was appropriated for application to the philosophical text of the *human* spirit, by those for whom the ‘living’ aspect of Hegel was the process of ‘comprehending the time’. As a response to the pretensions of the scientific understanding in its neo-Kantian or its historical positivist manifestations, this simplification of Hegel was also dialectically necessary. But as a doctrine of what philosophical comprehension *is*, the hermeneutics of the *Geisteswissenschaften* was as one-sided as its Kantian or positivist adversary. Because of its acceptance of the historical horizon of the *process* of comprehension as an absolute *limit*, Hegel would have said that ‘hermeneutics’ is the scepticism that is properly internal to philosophy as speculative science. In its insistence on *Verstehen* as an intellectually intuitive activity it was anti-logical (and hence anti-philosophical, *stricto sensu*). That this was not (is not) in itself a fault can be seen by comparing Dilthey’s historicism with that of Croce, with his simple opposition of the ‘true concepts’ and the ‘pseudo-concepts’ in logic, his narrow concentration on ethico-political values in history, and his monadic (anti-historical) view of the interpretation and criticism of poetry and art.

Gentile’s ‘actualism’ was not marred by this dyadic or reactive opposition to the natural scientific Understanding. His opposition of ‘concrete’ and ‘abstract’ concepts is genuinely Hegelian. But his conviction that no logical development of Hegel’s ‘absolute knowing’ was possible except in the triadic theory of Absolute Spirit led him to a cultural hermeneutic stance which, in comparison with the conceptual openness of the sceptical or existential hermeneutic tradition, appears even narrower and more impoverished than Croce’s historicism. For Gentile there is *only* the philosophical problem; all experience is implicitly ‘philosophical’ and every

spiritual reality is to be interpreted and evaluated as philosophy. The alienated Americans were ultimately more fortunate, even though they could not *recognize* their most important debts to Hegel's theory of Spirit.¹⁷

Gentile's monomania is the clue, finally, to a necessary adjustment of our perspective upon what Hegel achieved. Hegel's philosophy of Absolute Spirit is severely 'phenomenological'. It leads us firmly to the discovery of wisdom as the 'thought of the world'; and in this way the system of philosophy as the comprehension of one's time is led round in a great circle to its beginning in the quest for the philosophical concept of truth as absolute knowing. This was the best way of obviating the theological interpretation of the Logic as the science of a supernatural thought that is above time (in the sense of being 'outside' of time). It has not saved Hegel from being interpreted in that way – both honorifically and polemically – even to this very day. But his attitude to interpretation in terms of 'theosophical fancies' can be judged from his early reaction to Schulze's interpretation of Leibniz in those terms.¹⁸ He invited the theological misunderstanding, certainly, by dropping the *Phenomenology* from the *Encyclopaedia* as expounded at Berlin. But no one who studied his philosophy of religion as a *whole* ought to have fallen into it.

Even in its integral form, however, the system invites Gentile's misunderstanding. Philosophy itself as the *thought of the world* does appear to be the *absolute result*; everything gets absorbed into the *establishing* of wisdom. Yet that is a mistake. It was the relevant absolute truth *for the time* at which it appeared; but for us who must comprehend that time, it has a different aspect. Again the *Phenomenology* is the key to the right *logical* perspective. When we read of 'the only realm of spirits that there is' at the end of the *History of Philosophy* lectures, it seems to include only philosophers. But no one who recognizes the concrete circularity of the *Phenomenology* would offer that interpretation of the 'chalice of this realm of spirits' which Hegel borrows from Schiller's poem *Freundschaft*. From that chalice *every aspect of human experience* foams forth reconciled. Gentile is right in holding that the reconciliation is achieved only in and by philosophical interpretation. There is no 'beloved community' to be hoped for here – although 'hope' is a vital moment in our love for the rational community in which we actually live and move. Hegel's analysis of the 'moral world-view' exposes the logical fallacy implicit in Royce's 'hope'. The religious image of the Divine Interpreter at the beginning and the end of time is only a *representation* of the speculative reconciliation that is to be achieved – if it exists at all – now and here. But since the world we have to interpret now and here is not the 'Christian-German world', we cannot be satisfied, as Gentile was, with the *unequal* recognition that is logically imposed by the phenomenological perspective of Hegel's cultural theory as he – quite logically and with

perfect interpretative appropriateness for *his* time – constructed it. In our universal world community, every cultural tradition must be interpreted, appreciated and absolved into philosophical reconciliation in its own right (or from within, though not only by interpreters whose consciousness is formed within that tradition). We cannot be satisfied with the phenomenology of world history and world culture that Hegel left us even in its *formal* aspect. It is not, for instance, the inadequacy of his empirical knowledge of China and India that matters – indeed only the philosophically obtuse critic can suppose that that matters at all. Every ‘knot’ in the cultural chain of which Hegel speaks at the outset of chapter VII of the *Phenomenology* must be developed into the full circle which he there says explicitly that it is¹⁹. If we need to be practically convinced that this is the comprehension that the time requires, we need only to remember Hiroshima. But of course the achievement of the philosophical goal is not a guarantee of salvation from the threat that that name signifies. Theoretical wisdom is the virtue that is ‘best and most complete’. But the lesson of the Hegelian logic here is that there *cannot* be any guarantees of practical salvation. In order for theoretical wisdom to be achievable, while every age remains free and self-creative (which in a nutshell is what the wisdom says), this must be so. Practical salvation comes from the absolution of the self-preservative will in a loving union that no longer thinks of guarantees. Practical virtue is not ‘knowledge’ – for I feel certain that Mother Teresa would reject my doctrine of theoretical wisdom if she understood it. But the acceptance of this concept of practical salvation obviously embodies the dialectical identity of Being and Nothing. That is why it is a *logical* aspect of ‘love’ (or of Royce’s ‘loyalty’) that it does not ask for guarantees. What we ‘know’ is that nothing better than this reconciled community can be achieved by knowing; and that if we must perish – which is no news to anyone individually – there is no intellectual pursuit in which we (who have chosen it) can die happier.

Notes

1 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner, 1955), p. 16.

2 *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1968ff., [hereafter cited as *G.W.*], XI, 21, lines 19–21; cf. Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London, Allen & Unwin, 1969) [hereafter cited as Miller], p. 51.

3 *Hegel’s Logic*, Chicago, 1890 (reprint, New York, Garland, 1983), pp. 391–2.

4 What I am bold enough to call ‘babbling’ here certainly contained much that was valuable – a good example in English is Bradley’s ‘My Station and its Duties’. Even the creative interpretation of Hegel’s lectures by his editors – disastrous as it was for scholars like myself who seek to discover what Hegel himself thought – sometimes produced what I regard as genuine insights (for instance, the view

of *Faust* which Hotho injected into Hegel's Lectures on Aesthetics). Much of the 'babble' I have not read – especially the logical babble, and especially in German. I only call it 'babble' because no answers to my problems about the Hegelian 'system' emerged – not even wrong ones. Those who are convinced by my analysis of the problems will, I trust, find in the present essay enough of a model of how sense can be restored to (or recovered from) the cacophony to inspire other efforts at constructive dialogue with whatever Hegelian voices they can hear clearly. The word 'babble' essentially designates a subjective impression (even when we apply it to the proto-linguistic behaviour of infants). Only certain forms of vocal 'playing' can be accurately designated as 'babbling' in an objective judgment.

5 The traditional distinction between 'Right' and 'Left' is too simplistic for the classification of the orthodox students who did not yet see themselves faced with the task of cutting away dead wood. It only becomes useful after the task of saving the Hegelian truth imposes itself as a choice between the Absolute as God and the Absolute as Matter. In terms of that option all of the Anglo-Hegelian academics (and most of the non-academics) are 'Hegelians of the Right'. But the most original 'neo-Hegelians' in the Anglo-Saxon world were not 'Right Hegelians' when judged in terms of the theological range that existed before Marx and Engels crossed the 'fiery brook'. Royce's 'hope of the Great Community' is a theology of the pre-Marxist Hegelian Left; T. H. Green's social philosophy is founded in a philosophical faith of the same progressive sort. McTaggart's high theoretical standpoint made him contemptuous of all accommodatory views of the religious tradition. Hence he belongs to the 'Centre' (if that is where those who held firm to the concept of philosophy as pure contemplation of an eternal truth beyond all *practical* options should be put). I suspect that Bradley belongs in the 'Centre' too. But his position is too complex – and, for me, too rebarbative – to be classified easily.

6 For instance (in the Notebook of 1865): 'Hegel makes a great boast of the fact that his Logic develops its own method. Mine pursues a rational method of which the logic itself is but the deduction and proof. Moreover I am not forced to make my book unintelligible in order to follow mine, but on the contrary it is the very procedure [*sic*] which perspicuity demands' (Entry for December 14, *Writings*, I, 340). My interpretation of Peirce's relation to Hegel follows in the wake of that given in Max Fisch's article 'Hegel and Peirce', to which I am greatly indebted. (This first appeared in O'Malley *et al.* (ed.): *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974, 171–93; it is reprinted in M. H. Fisch, *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism*, Bloomington, IA, 1986, pp. 261–82.) Peirce made his first public reference to Hegel on 12 November 1863 (*Writings* ed. M. Fisch *et al.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, I, 104). In the 1890s he recorded that at the time 'I did not recognize the affinity of my thought to Hegel's because in all details it was entirely different, and because his weak logic and pretentiousness repelled me then more than now' (Fisch, 1974, p. 188 [1986, p. 276]).

7 Fisch, 1974, pp. 190–1 [1986, p. 278]; W. Nethery, 'C. S. Peirce to W. T. Harris', *The Personalist*, 43 (1962), pp. 35–45, p. 37. Peirce distinguishes his use of 'representation' from the general use of *Vorstellung* (already in 1865 – see *Writings*, I, 257; for his definition of Hegel's usage, given only a few months later, see *Writings*, I, 323). But the technical difference between a dyadic and a triadic interpretation of how 'representations' function does not affect the great divide that I am referring to here.

8 On 11 June 1868 he wrote in a letter to Harris: 'I am most pleased at your

giving us the *Phänomenologie*' (Fisch, 1974, pp. 183, 192 [1986, pp. 271, 279]; Nethery, *Personalist*, 1962, p. 40). But his references to Hegel continue to be to *logical* texts (or to the most abstract levels of 'real philosophical' texts such as the *Rechtsphilosophie*).

9 There is, however, one passage in the *Werke* (1832ff.) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Logica* which Peirce surely knew and remembered, since it comes in the lecture-commentary on the climax:

So it can also be said that the absolute Idea is the universal, but this universal is not merely the abstract form that confronts the particular content as something-other; on the contrary, it is the absolute form into which all determinations, the whole fullness of the content posited by it, have returned. In this perspective, the absolute Idea is to be compared with the old man who utters the same religious statements as the child, but for whom they carry the significance of his whole life. Even if the child understands the religious content, it still counts for him only as something outside of which lie the whole of life and the whole world.

And the situation is the same with human life in general and with the events that make up its content. All labour is directed only at this or that goal; and when it is attained, we are amazed to find just what we willed and nothing more. What is of interest is the whole movement. When we are carrying on with our lives, the end in view may appear very restricted, but it is the whole *decursus vitae* [course of life] that is embraced together in it. In the same way and for the same reason, the content of the absolute Idea is the whole display [*Ausbreitung*] that has passed before us up to this point. The last step is the insight that it is the whole unfolding that constitutes its content and its interest.

Moreover, this is the philosophical perspective: that everything which, taken by itself, appears to be restricted gets its value by belonging to the whole, and being a moment of the Idea. This is how we have had the content, and what we now have is the knowledge that the content is the living development of the Idea, and this simple looking back is contained in the form. Each of the stages considered so far is an image of the Absolute, but initially in a restricted way, and hence it drives itself on to the whole, whose unfolding is what we have called method.

(*Encyclopaedia*, §237, Zusatz – trans. W. A. Suchting)

Compare also *Wissenschaft der Logik* (G.W., XI, 28, lines 27–39); Miller, p. 58.

10 These quotations are taken from Fisch (1974), p. 183 [1986, p. 271]. (The context of the first quotation can be found in *Collected Papers* (Harvard University Press, 1931–58) 8, 112; the second – MS 478, p. 27 – has apparently not yet been published anywhere.)

11 Fisch (1974, p. 190 [1986, p. 277]) records that when Peirce obtained his copy of the 1827 *Encyclopaedia* (29 March 1867), he inscribed on the flyleaf the rude comment of Parmenides about those who are persuaded that to be and not-to-be are the same, yet not the same.

12 Lasson (1923), p. 36; Miller, p. 54; for the text of 1812 see G.W., XI, 25, lines 18–20.

13 G.W., XI, 28, lines 35–37; Miller, p. 58. (Those who think, like Michael Rosen, that the Hegelian science of pure thought is an irrelevant reincarnation of the flight of the Alone to the Alone should ask themselves why Hegel glorifies empirical 'impurity' like this. Compare also the *Encyclopaedia* lectures cited in note 9 above).

14 Peirce argued already in 1868 that we do not *understand* the identity of our true self with the sign-world that we create; because every human 'persists in identifying himself with his will, his power over the animal organism, with brute force'. Hegel's *Phenomenology* seeks to build the necessary conceptual bridge between the simple 'law of the stronger' and what Peirce calls 'the identity of a man' which 'consists in the *consistency* of what he does and thinks, and consistency is the intellectual of a thing; that is, is its expressing something' (*Writings*, II, 241).

15 G.W., XI, 27, line 38 – 28, line 4; Miller, p. 57.

16 *Nation* LXXV, 1902, 390 (review of J. B. Baillie, *Origin and Significance of Hegel's Logic*). Cf. Fisch (1974), p. 176 [1986, p. 265].

17 How far the social psychology and community-theory of the American thinkers is *empirically* indebted to Hegel and his influence it may never be possible to decide. The lines of communication are many and various, and the record of them has no doubt largely perished. We *can* say that one importantly relevant and conscious debt of Peirce's was not to Hegel but to one of Hegel's own sources: the *Aesthetic Letters* of Schiller. But when we are faced with Royce's assertion:

I now owe much more to our great and unduly neglected American logician, Mr. Charles Peirce, than I do to the common tradition of recent idealism, and certainly very much more than I ever have owed, at any point of my own philosophical development, to the doctrines which, with technical accuracy, can be justly attributed to Hegel. It is time, I think, that the long customary, but unjust and loose usage of the adjective 'Hegelian' should be dropped. The genuinely Hegelian views were the ones stated by Hegel himself, and by his early followers. My own interpretation of Christianity, in these volumes, despite certain agreements with the classical Hegelian theses, differs from that of Hegel, and of the classical Hegelian school, in important ways.

(*Problem of Christianity*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 39)

we need not cease to meditate on the probable influence of Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie* on Royce's interpretation of early California settlements; or on the way the St Louis Hegelians interpreted the Civil War and the United States as the 'land of the future' as significant for the young Royce; and these are matters which are certainly relevant to his mature theory of the community. (It does not matter to my thesis about the interpretation of Hegel, of course, whether there was any demonstrable Hegelian influence here at all. But I find the problems of interpretation unfailingly interesting; and the fact that one is not always one's own best interpreter is an important aspect of the cunning of Reason.)

18 See the 'Scepticismus' Aufsatz, G.W. IV, 230, line 4 – 235, line 20; English translation in *From Kant to Hegel*, ed. and trans. by G. di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, Albany: SUNY Press, 1985. At this stage Hegel himself may have been closer to Royce than to Peirce. His decisive rejection of the Neoplatonic context imposed on speculative problems by Schelling is in the *Jena Logic* (1804) – G.W., VII, 34, lines 16–18 (English trans. J. Burbidge *et al.*, Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1986, p. 36); and in public print it first appears in chapter III of the *Phenomenology* (G.W., IX, 100, lines 5–28; Miller, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977) §162).

19 G.W., IX., 366, lines 9–34; Miller (1977), §680.

From *Vorstellung* to thought: is a 'non-metaphysical' view of Hegel possible?

Michael Rosen

Is Hegel a metaphysician? The question might seem absurd – if not Hegel, who? 'Logic, therefore, coincides with metaphysics, the science of things grasped in Thought', he writes in the *Encyclopaedia*.¹ What could be clearer than that? But it all depends, of course, on what one means by 'metaphysics', and that, as philosophers know, can be practically anything. For a term which entered philosophy by the back door, 'metaphysics' has turned out to be an exceptionally elusive as well as tenacious house-guest.

In this paper I shall describe and criticize an interpretation of Hegel (or, to be more accurate, a family of interpretations) which had been proposed in the light of two related conceptions of metaphysics.

The first of these is Kant's. No interpretation of Hegel can ignore the degree to which Hegel's system was developed in the shadow of the Critical Philosophy. But this is not to say that Hegelianism simply represents the continuation of the Copernican Revolution by other means. I shall argue that there is an important sense in which Hegel's philosophy constitutes a return to a pre-Kantian ideal of philosophical knowledge, albeit one which is informed in important respects by the legacy of the Kantian system. The second is the criticism of metaphysics mounted by the analytical philosophers of language. It was this critique which gave the specific impetus to the family of interpretations which I call 'non-metaphysical',² although, as we shall see, it is the Kantian conception of metaphysics on which the 'non-metaphysical' strategy draws most heavily.

The Kantian and the analytical criticisms of metaphysics are related. But there are important differences between them: most significantly, the fact that Kantianism contains within itself the promise of a more positive attitude towards metaphysics. While W. H. Walsh was certainly right to call the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* 'the most thorough and devastating of all anti-metaphysical writings',³ it should be remembered that the function

of the *Kritik* is, as Kant says, propaedeutic, to clear the ground for 'the science which exhibits in its systematic connection the whole body . . . of philosophical knowledge arising out of pure reason, and which is entitled metaphysics' (B 869).⁴ Contrast this with the famous dismissal of metaphysics by A. J. Ayer in *Language, Truth and Logic*:

Our charge against the metaphysician is not that he attempts to employ the understanding in a field where it cannot profitably venture, but that he produces sentences which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a sentence can be literally significant.⁵

According to Ayer, all metaphysical propositions, without exception, violate the 'criterion of significance', by which to know the meaning of a factual proposition is to know the means of verifying it (p. 41). There are, in fact, two ways in which Kant's view of metaphysics is less destructive than this: in his attitude towards traditional metaphysics and in the 'post-Critical' alternative he proposes to it. Traditional metaphysics does indeed, Kant charges, 'venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience' (B xxiv); it believes itself to be dealing with a domain of supersensible objects whose nature is discoverable by purely conceptual investigation, despite the fact that, as Kant says, 'all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have ended in failure' (B xvi). The analytic method is 'useless' for the purposes of metaphysics, Kant says, 'since it merely shows what is contained in its concepts' (B 23) rather than making the genuine contribution to the extension of our *a priori* knowledge which is required. In contrast to this, 'metaphysics consists, at least *in intention*, entirely of *a priori* synthetic propositions' (B 18).

The Kantian objection to traditional metaphysics focuses, then, on its method – the assumption that it is possible, purely analytically, to gain substantive knowledge beyond the limits set by experience. Yet this still holds the promise of a positive alternative: the possibility of metaphysics based on a method for the discovery of synthetic *a priori* propositions *other than* by rational inspection of the necessary properties of objects outside space and time. Kantian metaphysics is not analytic but transcendental: concerned 'not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this is to be possible *a priori*' (B 25). It is to explain both 'how there can be knowledge *a priori*, and, in addition, to furnish satisfactory proofs of the laws which form the *a priori* basis of nature' (B xix).

This contrast between Kant and the verificationists is important for my purposes, and it requires particular emphasis, for it has become somewhat obscured in recent Anglo-American Kant interpretation, dominated, as it has been, by P. F. Strawson's brilliant and path-breaking *The Bounds*

of Sense.⁶ Strawson's reading of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* takes as its point of departure what he calls Kant's 'principle of significance'. This, he says, is 'the principle that there can be no legitimate, or even meaningful, employment of ideas or concepts which does not relate them to empirical or experiential conditions of their application' (p. 16). It is the principle of significance which, according to Strawson, entails 'Kant's complete repudiation of transcendent metaphysics' (p. 16). The echo of Ayer's 'criterion of significance' is deliberate: as Strawson puts it: 'In his espousal of the principle of significance . . . Kant is close to the tradition of classical empiricism . . . which has probably, at least in England, received its clearest modern expression in the writings of A. J. Ayer' (p. 18).

What is potentially misleading in Strawson's interpretation is the way in which it blurs the distinction between what it is to use a concept to form significant beliefs and what it is to use it to make judgments and yield knowledge. The verificationist, of course, argues that there is no such distinction: to know the meaning of a term is just to know the contribution it makes to determining the truth of an utterance of which it forms part. But, for Kant, the two are not equivalent. Kant does indeed believe that concepts can only yield knowledge in relation to empirical intuitions, but this is *not* because, in the absence of such intuitions, they are meaningless. Kant's criticism of transcendent metaphysics depends. I shall argue, on a theory of judgment, not a theory of meaning – a point which has a substantial bearing on how we should understand his relationship to Hegel.

As regards meaning, it is – ironically, perhaps – the very closeness of Kant's view of the mind to the classical empiricism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume which separates him from the modern empiricist, Ayer. According to empiricism in its basic form, beliefs or judgments were combinations of ideas which took their intelligibility from the simple ideas out of which they were formed. Meaning was, in essence, a matter of possessing the ideas with which words were associated.

The empiricists used the term 'idea' generically – not in the Platonic sense of an ideal archetype but to denote whatever formed the immediate object of consciousness. Kant, however, as is well known, disputed this usage most vigorously:

I beseech those who have the interests of philosophy at heart . . . that . . . they be careful to preserve the expression 'Idea' [*Idee*] in its original meaning, that it may not become one of those expressions which are commonly used to indicate any and every species of *Vorstellung*, in a happy-go-lucky confusion, to the consequent detriment of science.

But, while Kant rejects the empiricist terminology, his own conception of the mind and its contents has recognizably empiricist origins. *Vorstellung*, the word Kant uses in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to designate mental contents in general, was, it should be noted, the original word used for 'idea' in German translations of the British empiricists, and though, in deference to Kant's strictures noted above, it has been translated back into English as 'representation', the affinity between Kantian *Vorstellung* and empiricist 'idea' remains close. *Vorstellungen* are, quite literally, whatever are 'placed before' the mind; there is no gap between *having* a *Vorstellung* and understanding it.

Vorstellungen are classified according to an ascending hierarchy. At the lowest level are sensations and intuitions; above them come concepts, either pure or empirical; finally, Kant says, there are ideas proper, 'concepts of reason' which are 'formed from [pure concepts] and transcending the possibility of experience' (B 377).

It is in his account of the mutual relations between *Vorstellungen* that Kant most clearly parts company with the empiricists. Where they had tended to treat judgments as mere complexes of ideas, Kant emphasizes the judgment's fundamentally asymmetric structure. Judgments, Kant says, are 'functions of unity among our *Vorstellungen*' (B 93); what gives them this unity are *concepts* – *Vorstellungen* themselves, but *Vorstellungen* of a particular kind. Concepts do not relate immediately to an object but 'to some other *Vorstellung* of it, be that *Vorstellung* an intuition or itself a concept' (B 93). In judgments, intuitions are not simply associated with concepts; they are 'thought through' them. Neither intuitions nor concepts alone can determine an object, from which it follows that, for knowledge (which Kant defines as 'the determinate relation of given *Vorstellungen* to an object' (B 157)) both are required:

We cannot think an object save through categories; we cannot *know* an object so thought save through intuitions corresponding to those concepts.

(B 165)

Thus it can be seen that what lies behind Kant's rejection of transcendent metaphysics is not a principle of significance (as to what can be meaningfully thought) but a principle of judgment: the dual requirements of the condition for knowledge exclude the possibility of purely conceptual knowledge beyond the scope – at least, potentially – of a corresponding intuition. The traditional metaphysician violates this principle, but that is not to say that his claims are unintelligible. In fact, Kant believes, metaphysical discourse quite properly directs itself to a domain of transcendent objects – though these are far fewer in number than once populated Plato's realm of Ideas. *God, freedom and immortality* repre-

sent, as it were, the rational kernel of metaphysics' subject matter. It is not the content of traditional metaphysics which disqualifies it, but its method: the attempt to gain knowledge analytically rather than synthetically.

Positively, then, metaphysics, like all attempts to extend our knowledge, must consist of synthetic propositions. But that is not to say that, for Kant, all synthetic *a priori* propositions are metaphysical. In the view of philosophy developed in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* synthetic *a priori* propositions figure in two ways. First, there are the prospective principles of that future metaphysics to which the Critical Philosophy provides the 'prolegomena'. But there is, too, what Kant takes to be the already existing body of *a priori* knowledge: mathematics and 'pure science of nature'. Without themselves being metaphysical (though the dividing line between metaphysics and pure science of nature, in particular, is not at all clear), the latter have an important philosophical function. The fact that such propositions exist invites the central philosophical question: how are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible?, the answer to which, it is supposed, will not just illuminate their own nature but will establish the possibility of metaphysics in general. Once again, the answer derives from Kant's doctrine of judgment: since knowledge requires both intuitions and concepts, synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible only in relation to the 'formal conditions of a *a priori* intuition' (B 197); it is established 'not . . . directly from concepts alone, but always only indirectly through relation of these concepts to something altogether contingent, namely, *possible experience*' (B 765).

Thus it is the principle of judgment which both disqualifies the analytic method of traditional metaphysics and entails that, if metaphysics is to be possible, it must develop its propositions in relation to some 'third thing' – possible experience. But the principle of judgment is not a principle of significance: the propositions of traditional metaphysics are intelligible by virtue of the *Vorstellung* with which their contents – God, freedom and immortality – are associated.

From the point of view of the interpretation of Hegel, then, Kantianism offers the prospect of a moderate response to the verificationist onslaught. It may be possible to deflect the verificationist attack by showing that Hegel's philosophy can meet at least Kantianism's more limited standards, and it is this strategy which is to be found in the work which initiated the 'non-metaphysical' approach to the reading of Hegel, J. N. Findlay's *Hegel: A Re-examination*.⁷ As its title makes clear, Findlay's book set out to reopen a case which the vast majority of Anglo-Saxon philosophers took to have been settled long since. Writing with the verificationist critique of metaphysics very much in mind – Findlay acknowledges the assistance of his London colleague Ayer in the composition of his book – Findlay explicitly rejects the view of Hegel as a metaphysician:

despite much opinion to the contrary, Hegel's philosophy is one of the most anti-metaphysical of philosophical systems, one that remains most within the pale of ordinary experience, and which accords no place to entities or properties lying beyond that experience or to facts undiscoverable by ordinary methods of investigation.

(p. 340)

For Findlay, Hegel – though far from being a logical positivist – neither deals with objects beyond the range of experience nor employs a relentlessly *a priori* method, 'seeking to deduce the detail of nature and history from the relationship of abstract concepts' (p. 23). It should be made clear, however, that there is an important sense in which Findlay's view of Hegel is not Kantian. Findlay rejects what might seem to be a temptation: to read Hegel's philosophy as an extension of transcendental idealism. To interpret Hegel's Absolute Idealism along these lines would be to see Hegel as taking Kant's claim that our knowledge of objects is confined to appearances a stage further. From this perspective, as Findlay writes, 'the main merit of Hegel lay in thoroughly liquidating the "transcendental object" or "thing in itself" of Kant, the thing as it exists *apart* from thought or consciousness' (p. 22). Hence Kant's contention that the conditions of the possibility of experience are the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience becomes the claim that they are the conditions of the possibility of reality *schlechthin*. But, for Findlay, 'This "objective idealism" is more the position of Hegel's predecessors than of Hegel himself: to attribute it to him is to ignore . . . the extent to which for him "the Idea" is objective after the manner of Plato and Aristotle and not after the manner of Kant' (p. 22).

The rejection of this 'neo-Kantian' way of understanding Hegel leaves the 'non-metaphysical' interpreter with a problem, however: if Hegel's method is *neither* that of describing a supra-empirical, Absolute reality by *a priori* means, *nor* that of identifying reality's necessary structure by reflecting on the conditions of the possibility of experience of it, how is it to be understood? Findlay's answer is highly significant, for the outlines of the strategy he adopts were to become standard in the revival of interest in Hegel which followed the publication of his book.

On Findlay's view, Hegel's philosophy is, above all, a *reconstruction* of the material it deals with: an attempt to discern structure in – not impose it on – external reality. It is in this sense that Findlay refers to 'Hegel's genuine empiricism and freedom from *a priori* presuppositions' (p. 24). It is worth noting three consequences of Findlay's approach.

First, and most important, is the relation between Hegel's conceptual structure and the material with which it is intended to deal. 'As regards the application of Hegel's peculiar method to the facts of nature and

history, it is plain', Findlay believes, 'that the fit is loose and intended to be loose' (p. 23).

From which it follows that the 'abstract argument' of the dialectic is to be understood in a less rigoristic way than is common. Interpreters are wrong, Findlay believes, to see in Hegel's procedures for the connection and transition between thought-determinations a form of deductive necessity:

They are rather precepts which urge us to pass from notions in which some principle is latent, to other notions in which the same principle will become manifest.

(p. 23)

Finally, Findlay rejects the idea that the celebrated motive power of the Hegelian method – the notion of contradiction – should be interpreted with full logical force. Here, Findlay believes, Hegel himself is misled as to the nature of his own insight. In fact, 'whatever Hegel may say in regard to the presence of contradictions in thought and reality' his use of the term does not amount to the logical absurdity of asserting both A and not-A:

By the presence of 'contradictions' in thought and reality, Hegel plainly means the presence of opposed, antithetical *tendencies*.

(p. 77)

From all of this it will be apparent to philosophers from outside the analytic tradition that one consequence of Findlay's defence of Hegel is to draw him into close proximity to another avowedly non-metaphysical conception of philosophy: the hermeneutic conception.⁸ But I shall not pursue this point here, for my concern is not to produce a detailed typology of readings of Hegel but with the broad structures which certain of them have in common.

As I see it, 'non-metaphysical' interpretations of Hegel share two essential features. First, as regards the content of Hegel's system, the 'non-metaphysical' interpretation claims that Hegel does not attempt to deal with objects beyond the range of sensible experience. Second, as regards its method, the 'non-metaphysical' interpretation denies that Hegel's philosophy is aprioristic in the sense in which Kant attacks dogmatic metaphysics for being aprioristic.

It is my contention that, while 'non-metaphysical' interpretations of Hegel have certainly been valuable in highlighting the issues surrounding Hegel's method, the picture that they give of his philosophy is seriously misleading. In the remainder of this paper, I shall argue that – whether one likes it or not – Hegel's speculative philosophy plainly corresponds

in its central aspects to what, from the Kantian point of view, would be counted as 'dogmatic metaphysics'. But Hegel is not inconsistent. While the Kantian critique of dogmatic metaphysics depends on Kant's theory of judgment, Hegel holds a view of judgment which, while sharing Kant's opposition to empiricism, differs from him at crucial points. It is this which underpins Hegel's much more ambitious assessment of the possibility of philosophical cognition, both as regards its objects and its methods.

As we saw, for Kant the starting point for the possibility of metaphysics is the question: how are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible? The answer is both a condition for and a clue to philosophical knowledge: by understanding how those synthetic *a priori* propositions which, as a matter of fact, *do* exist are possible we will be in a position to develop the strictly philosophical synthetic *a priori* propositions which form the content of metaphysics. Thus philosophical knowledge is parallel to other forms of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, but it is not derivative from or in competition with them. For Hegel, on the other hand, the sciences themselves contain an immanent deficiency – an inadequacy which moves us from the empirical sciences to philosophy. There are, in Hegel's view, two main defects in the methods of empirical science:

First, in this mode of science the universal which is contained in it – the species etc. – is on its own account undetermined and does not relate autonomously [*fuer sich*] to the particular. Each is external and accidental to the other, as the particulars connected together are likewise mutually external and accidentally related. And further, its beginnings are in every case immediate elements, received data or presuppositions. In both these respects the form of necessity fails to get its due. (Enz., para. 9)

It is these defects – the lack of necessity in its connections and the contingent character of its starting point – which provide the motivation for philosophy:

The empirical sciences, on the other hand, carry with them the impulse to vanquish that form in which the richness of their context is presented as something merely immediate and received – a merely mutually juxtaposed (and thus entirely accidental) multiplicity – and to raise this content to necessity. This impulse drags thought away from this form of universality and its innately [*an sich*] provided satisfaction and impels it into a development from its own self. The latter is, on the one hand, only an absorption of the content [of science] and the determinations it provides; on the other hand, it gives them the form of original Thought emerging only according to the necessity of the *Sache selbst*.

(Enz., para. 12)

Philosophy, then, has a necessary function in fulfilling the cognitive aspirations of the empirical sciences. Indeed, Hegel goes so far as to say that:

Whatever truth there may be in the content of any discipline or science, it can only deserve the name if such truth has been engendered by philosophy.⁹

The empirical sciences provide data, it is true. But data, as such, are not the end of the story. Any account of the nature of reality – even one which sets out with wholly scientific intentions – which ends with a simple statement of empirical facts has a kind of explanatory inadequacy:

Philosophy, then, owing its own development to the empirical sciences, gives their content in return that most essential form, the freedom of Thought: an *a priori* character. These contents are now warranted as necessary instead of depending on the evidence of facts merely as found and experienced. The fact becomes a presentation and a copy [*Darstellung und Nachbildung*] of the original and entirely independent activity of Thought.

(Enz., para. 12)

So, for Hegel, there is an overlap between philosophy and the empirical sciences in a way in which, for Kant, there is not. One might, perhaps, take this to support the 'non-metaphysical' reading of Hegel: it is not, on this view, their material which separates the sciences from philosophy for Hegel but their form. But to say this is to address only one part of Hegel's claims for philosophy. Because philosophy is intended to take up material from the empirical sciences it does not follow that it is intended to deal *only* with that material – a point which Hegel makes quite clear:

However satisfying this [empirical] knowledge may be in its own field, there shows itself . . . another sphere of objects which it does not include, namely, freedom, *Geist*, God . . . The reason is that these objects by their very content show at once that they are infinite.

(Enz., para. 8)

This trio of freedom, *Geist* and God echoes, of course, Kant's three objects of transcendent metaphysics – God, freedom and immortality (the reason behind Hegel's substitution of *Geist* for immortality would be well worth pursuing). For Hegel, it is, quite explicitly, part of the task of philosophy to 'know absolute objects' (Enz., para. 10), not simply to *think* them – a task which collides with the 'prejudice' (as Hegel calls it)

that 'the infinite cannot be grasped in concepts' (*Enz.*, para. 9). Speculative philosophy is, then, just as much rational theology as it is rational science of nature:

To know God by means of reason is the highest task of Science.
(*Enz.*, para. 36)

Thus Hegel's conception of philosophy is more inclusive than Kant's in two directions: it extends, as it were, 'downwards' to overlap with the material of the empirical sciences as well as 'upwards' to include objects which, for Kant, were only to be thought, not known. The 'non-metaphysical' interpretation of Hegel stresses the former but neglects (or weakens) the latter aspect of his work.

The contrast between Hegel and Kant is more marked still when it comes to their view of the status which philosophy seeks to give its subject matter: to give the content of the empirical sciences 'an *a priori* character', to 'raise its content to necessity', as Hegel wishes, crosses the very dividing line which Kant has carefully drawn between *a priori* reflection and empirical knowledge. So it is not surprising or inconsistent to find Hegel taking the side of traditional metaphysics against Kant as regards the scope of *a priori* knowledge:

This [metaphysical system] regarded Thought-determinations as the fundamental determinations of things; in virtue of this presupposition – that that which is is known as it is by being Thought – it stood at a higher level than the subsequent Critical Philosophy.
(*Enz.*, para. 28)

To appreciate why Hegel's attitude does not merely represent a return to a pre-Kantian conception of philosophy, however, it is necessary to compare the two philosophers' conceptions of judgment.

For Kant, the alternative between analytic and synthetic judgments is set by whether 'the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or [whether] B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it' (B 10). It was the error of dogmatic metaphysics to imagine that it could arrive at substantive knowledge by the former route. While Hegel to a large extent concurs in Kant's characterization of the aims and aspirations of traditional metaphysics, his own criticism of its method is quite different:

it should be noted that the procedure consisted in *attributing* predicates to the object to be known (for example God). That, however, is an external reflection on the object; for the determinations (predicates)

are ready and at hand in my *Vorstellung* and are only attributed externally to the object. Whereas the true cognition of an object must be in such a fashion that the object determines itself from its own self rather than receiving its predicates externally.

(*Enz.*, para. 28)

On Hegel's view, traditional metaphysics does not simply mistake for analytic a task which is, in fact, synthetic: the conception of philosophical judgments as a matter of assigning predicate-terms to subjects, and, indeed, the very antithesis between analytic and synthetic method which it presupposes are out of place:

The method of absolute cognition is thus analytic. The absolute objectivity of the notion, whose certainty the method is, lies in finding the further determination of its initial universal in that universal alone. But it is equally *synthetic* to the extent that its object, determined immediately as a simple universal, shows itself as another by means of the determinacy which it has itself in its immediacy and universality. This relationship to something different, which it is in its own self, is, however, no longer what is meant by synthesis in finite cognition. The very fact of its analytical determination, that it is relationship *within* the notion, distinguishes it entirely from such synthesis.¹⁰

How can Hegel suppose that philosophical knowledge is of such a kind that 'the object determines itself from its own self'? What is it to find 'the further determination of its initial universal in that universal alone'?

Such things are certainly impossible so long as we think of mental life simply in terms of *Vorstellungen*. But for Hegel – and this is indeed his whole point – *Vorstellungen* are not the end of the story:

The difference between *Vorstellung* and Thought is of special importance because philosophy may be said to do nothing but transform *Vorstellungen* into Thoughts.

(*Enz.*, para. 20)

Vorstellungen, Hegel says, represent 'metaphors of Thoughts and notions' – metaphors which actually obscure their content:

From the fact that one has *Vorstellungen*, however, it does not follow that one knows their significance for Thought – the Thoughts and notions which belong to them.

(*Enz.*, para. 3)

There is a common prejudice, Hegel says, that philosophy is incompre-

hensible, paradoxical or mystical; so it will seem, indeed, so long as consciousness attempts to conceive the nature of Thought according to the received standards and limitations of *Vorstellung*:

It is commonly said by people that they do not know what to *think* in regard to a notion; in regard to a notion nothing is to be thought save the notion itself. But what lies behind this phrase, however, is a longing for an already known, familiar *Vorstellung*. It is as if in losing the mode of *Vorstellung* consciousness were having the ground cut away from under it on which it otherwise had a firm and familiar stance.

(*Enz.*, para. 3)

The classical example of consciousness in the mode of *Vorstellung* – or, rather, of a philosophical account of the nature of thought which represents it in *Vorstellung* terms – is, of course, empiricism, with its atomistic conception of the mind as a collection of particular ideas bound by the laws of association (the mental counterpart to the corpuscularian view of nature as particles of matter in motion). From Hegel's perspective, the Kantian theory of judgment represents a half-way house on the way from empiricism – it points towards, but does not attain, the nature of Thought. On the one hand, Kant, like the empiricists, seeks an exhaustive characterization of mental life in terms of *Vorstellungen*. On the other, judgment, for Kant, is more than a simple association of *Vorstellungen*. To judge objectively we must refer our intuitions to the 'transcendental unity of apperception' which is 'that unity through which all the manifold in an intuition is united in a concept of an object' (B 139). In such a judgment the predicate is neither 'contained in' the subject-term (however we are supposed to think of that) nor is it something which is merely associated with it as part of what the empiricists called a 'complex idea'. For Hegel, the nature of this connection – the propositional link, as it has been called – is crucial. It reveals, he believes, the existence of a special kind of *innate* or *intrinsic* connectedness, quite different from the merely external view of judgment current in traditional logic, according to which, he says:

The subject is assumed as a fixed point to which, as their support, the predicates are affixed by a movement belonging to the knower, and which is not regarded as belonging to the fixed point itself.

(*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 23)

The very act of predication, however, Hegel claims, has a force which goes against this:

But, as the copula 'is' utters the predicate of the subject, this external

subjective subsuming is set aside again and the judgment taken as a determination of the *object* itself . . . Of course, the determinations of individuality and universality, subject and predicate, are also distinct, but there remains no less the quite universal *fact* that every judgment expresses them as identical. The copula 'is' comes from the nature of the notion which is to be identical with itself in its externalization.

(*Enz.*, para. 166)

Thus, for Hegel, judgment has some of the features which are characteristic of analytic judgments – the predicate term is intrinsically related to the subject-term – while, at the same time, like the synthetic judgment, the predicate amplifies the subject's content.

Of course, not all propositions which are called 'judgments' in the normal way of things would count as judgments in this full, strong sense. Nevertheless, it is this speculative ideal which connects 'the system of pure reason, as the realm of the pure Thought' (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, I, p. 31) to the empirical sciences in such a way as to represent the fulfilment of their innate aspirations. Kant, according to Hegel, fails to follow through the consequences which this insight into the nature of synthesis has opened up:

This *original synthesis of apperception* is one of the most profound principles for speculative development; it contains the starting point for a true grasp of the nature of the notion and is completely opposed to that empty identity or abstract universality which is no synthesis in itself. The later exposition, however, hardly corresponds to this beginning. The very expression *synthesis* easily leads back to the *Vorstellung* of an external unity and mere combination of things which are intrinsically separate. Thereupon the Kantian philosophy came to a halt at the psychological image of the notion and regressed once more to the assertion of the permanent conditionedness of the notion by a manifold of intuition.

(*Wissenschaft der Logik*, II, p. 277)

The empiricists, then, have a description of mental life based on *Vorstellung*; its central characteristic is the particularity and mutual isolation of its contents. Kant, who finds this account inadequate, attempts to remedy it by introducing new metaphors to capture the interconnectedness of mental contents: particulars are 'contained in' universals; *Vorstellungen* are 'thought through' one another by means of concepts. But these metaphors are themselves, Hegel charges, unsatisfactory: to think of a synthesis as if it were a 'holding together' of diverse particulars obscures rather than elucidates the primary difficulty – how to conceive an intrinsic relation between two heterogeneous kinds of mental item.

Kant has brought our conception of mental life, Hegel says, to the level of understanding: the level of an abstract kind of universality which remains essentially separate from the particular. Beyond this there lies the level of the notion:

Now the universal of the notion is not just a common feature which has its own subsistence in relation to the particular, but rather it is what is self-particularizing (specifying) and what in undimmed clarity remains at home in its other.

(*Enz.*, para. 163)

In a sense, what Hegel had done is to take the difficulty which he finds in Kant's theory and simply stand it on its head. If it is the case that, in considering universals as *abstractions from or containers for* particulars, we fail to do justice to the kind of connectedness inherent in judgment, then this shows that there is something fundamentally wrong with this whole metaphorical approach. And, if that is so, then the consequence may also be a liberating one: to show that, when it comes to the nature of Thought as such, we should not regard the claims made on its behalf as absurd or self-contradictory just because they clash with images drawn from the 'finite realm'.

The most important such claim is that the notion is 'self-particularizing' – that genuine content is obtainable at the level of Thought so that 'the object determines itself from its own self rather than receiving its predicates externally' (*Enz.*, para. 28). If such judgments are indeed possible, it opens the way for philosophy to provide speculative knowledge in the full sense: by following through the self-particularizing path of the notion in Thought to reveal a necessary structure of which the facts of nature are, as Hegel says, 'a presentation and a copy' (*Enz.*, para. 12). It is this doctrine which enables Hegel to be both a 'relentless *a priorist*' and to hold that '“the Idea” is objective after the manner of Plato and Aristotle and not after the manner of Kant'.¹¹ So far from being opposed to one another, as Findlay believes, the two positions follow jointly, for Hegel, from the rejection of the Kantian account of the nature of concepts:

It is an inversion of things to assume that first there are objects, forming the content of our *Vorstellungen*, and that subsequently our subjective activity comes into play, forming concepts by the afore-mentioned operation of abstracting and colligating what is common to objects. The notion, rather, is that which truly comes first, and things are what they are because of the activity of their intrinsic notion, revealing itself in them. This is apparent in our religious consciousness, with the effect that we say that God created the world out of nothing, or, to put it another way, the world emerged from the plenitude of the divine

Thoughts and decrees. We acknowledge thereby that the Thought, and specifically the notion, is the infinite form – that free creative activity which can realize itself without the need for a material present outside itself.

(*Enz.*, para. 163)

Absolute idealism, then, combines conceptual realism (the belief that concepts are part of the structure of reality) with a doctrine of pure speculative knowledge: the notion gives *a priori* Thought the capacity to generate content:

the notion, in so far as it is not trivial, empty identity, has the different determinations in the moments of its negativity or of its absolute activity of determination; the content is nothing at all other than such determinations of the Absolute Form – posited by itself and therefore its appropriate content.

(*Wissenschaft der Logik*, II, p. 231)

Such immanent development of content *a priori* is precisely what the Kantian critique of metaphysics denied: synthetic *a priori* knowledge can be established, Kant argues, 'always only indirectly through relation of these concepts to something altogether contingent, namely *possible experience*' (B 765). For Hegel, however, there is no 'third thing'. While Kant sets a sharp dividing line between analytic and synthetic judgments, his own account of the transcendental unity of apperception – synthesis in an intrinsic sense – undermines, Hegel believes, that very distinction.

The path from this insight (if it is one) to the full ramifications of Hegel's system is, of course, long and complex, and it is not my purpose to pursue it here. What I have shown, I believe, is that Hegel's speculative philosophy is radically opposed to Kantianism both in scope and methods. Nevertheless, when we come to examine the theory of judgment on which it is based, it is apparent that Hegel remains – albeit critically – in Kant's debt.

Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, edited by E. Moldenhauer and K.-M. Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973), para. 24, my translation.

2 The name is Klaus Hartmann's. (See K. Hartmann, 'Hegel: a Non-Metaphysical View', in A. MacIntyre (ed.), *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp. 101–25.) [reprinted above, pp. 243–58. R.S.]

3 W. H. Walsh, *Metaphysics* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 38.

4 I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, translated by N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933).

5 A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, second edition (London: Gollancz, 1946), p. 35.

6 P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966).

7 J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958).

8 For hermeneutic philosophy of the kind which has been dominant within German philosophy for the last thirty years the dividing line between metaphysical and non-metaphysical philosophy is set not so much by the attempt to deal with objects beyond the reach of experience as by metaphysics' aspiration to be a *prima philosophia*: a source of presuppositionless and timelessly valid truths. Because philosophy – like all fully linguistic thought – is a matter of interpretation, the hermeneutic philosophers believe, philosophy's results will be relative to the cultural material that it takes as its subject matter. Only at the end of time would final truth be possible. The readings of Hegel which this conception of philosophy has stimulated – not least by Hans-Georg Gadamer himself – have a great deal in common, it seems to me, with the 'non-metaphysical' approach described here.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, edited by J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 55, my translation.

10 G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, edited by G. Lasson, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1934), II, p. 491, my translation.

11 Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination*, pp. 23, 22.

Transition or reflection

John Burbidge

The term 'dialectic' appears seldom within the text of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*. That work develops using *Uebergehen*, *Reflexion* and *Begriff*, terms that take their place within the systematic progression from indeterminate being to self-determining method.¹ Yet in the second edition of *Die Lehre vom Sein*, Hegel adds a passage with an explicit reference to dialectical development:

In den verschiedenen Kreisen der Bestimmung und besonders im Fortgange der Exposition, oder näher im Fortgange des Begriffs zu seiner Exposition ist es eine Hauptsache, dies immer wohl zu unterscheiden, was noch *an sich* und was *gesetzt* ist, wie die Bestimmungen als im Begriffe und wie sie als gesetzt oder als seiend-für-Anderes sind. Es ist dies ein Unterschied, der nur der dialektischen Entwicklung angehört, den das metaphysische Philosophieren, worunter auch das kritische gehört, nicht kennt.

(L, I, 109)²

What distinguishes a dialectical development is the distinction between what is inherent and what is posited.

There is evidence to suggest that Hegel saw the importance of this distinction only after completing the first edition of Book I. In the edition of 1812, Hegel's move from *Daseyn überhaupt* to *Etwas* goes by way of *Andersseyn*, *Seyn-für-anderes* und *Ansichseyn* and *Realität*.

When summarizing this movement in the early paragraphs of 'Etwas', he notes that *Daseyn* is the immediate unity of *Seyn* and *Nichts*, but *Realität* has introduced the difference between *Ansichseyn* and *Seyn-für-anderes* as determinations of reflection:

Die Realität ist diese Einheit in dem bestimmten Unterschiede ihrer

Momente, die an ihr verschiedene *Seiten* ausmachen, Reflexionsbestimmungen, die gegen einander gleichgültig sind.

(*HW*, II. 65)

By the second edition, Hegel has transferred the discussion of *Ansichseyn* and *Seyn-für-anderes* to a stage subsequent to *Etwas*.³ And in his remarks on this development he denies to these two 'sides' of *Etwas* the character of *Reflexionsbestimmungen*. The passage is sufficiently important to be quoted at length:

Das Ansichsein hat zunächst das Sein-für-Anderes zu seinem gegenüberstehenden Momente; aber es wird demselben auch das *Gesetztsein* gegenübergestellt; in diesem Ausdruck liegt zwar auch das Sein-für-Anderes, aber er enthält bestimmt die bereits geschehene Zurückbeugung dessen, was nicht an sich ist, in das, was sein Ansichsein, worin es *positiv* ist. Das *Ansichsein* ist gewöhnlich als eine abstrakte Weise, den Begriff auszudrücken, zu nehmen; *Setzen* fällt eigentlich erst in die Sphäre des Wesens, der objektiven Reflexion . . . In der Sphäre des Seins *geht* das Dasein aus dem Werden nur *hervor*, oder mit dem Etwas ist ein Anderes, mit dem Endlichen das Unendliche gesetzt,⁴ aber das Endliche bringt das Unendliche nicht hervor, *setzt* dasselbe nicht. In der Sphäre des Seins ist das *Sichbestimmen* des Begriffs selbst nur erst *an sich* – so heisst es ein Uebergehen; auch die reflektierenden Bestimmungen des Seins, wie Etwas und Anderes, oder das Endliche und Unendliche, ob sie gleich wesentlich aufeinander hinweisen oder als Sein-für-Anderes sind, gelten als *qualitative* für sich bestehend; das *Andere ist*, das Endliche gilt ebenso als *unmittelbar seiend* und für sich feststehend wie das Unendliche; ihr Sinn erscheint als vollendet auch ohne ihr Anderes. Das Positive und Negative hingegen, Ursache und Wirkung, so sehr sie auch als isoliert seiend genommen werden, haben zugleich keinen Sinn ohne einander.

(*L*, I. 108–9)

Here, although with *Etwas* an other is posited, they do not posit each other. Rather than being determinations of reflection (as they are in the first edition), each subsists qualitatively on its own account.

This significant refinement in the second edition immediately precedes the reference to dialectic cited earlier. It thus provides us with some evidence for our investigation concerning the nature of dialectic: what is it that distinguishes one logical moment as *an sich* or *sich* or inherent, and another as posited reflectively?⁵

I

In the first edition, Hegel initiates the section on *Daseyn als solches* with the phrase: 'Das Daseyn als solches bestimmt sich an ihm selbst' (HGW, 11.59). The reflexive but active verb is deleted from the second edition. In its place is added the sentence: 'Aus dem Werden geht das Dasein hervor' (L, I, 96). The long passage cited above draws attention to that distinction: 'In der Sphäre des Seins geht das Dasein aus dem Denken nur hervor'. And again, 'In der Sphäre des Seins ist das *Sichbestimmen* des Begriffs selbst nur erst *an sich* – so heißt es ein Uebergehen.'⁶ The active force of 'sich bestimmen' is reserved to the concept. As immediate or in itself, this dynamic simply happens. One uses the phrases: 'proceeds out of', 'passing over', or 'transition'.

Uebergehen first appears in the *Logik* in the section on *Werden*. After the thought of being turns out to be of nothing, and the thought of nothing turns out to be of being. Hegel writes: 'Was die Wahrheit ist, ist weder das Seyn, noch das Nichts, sondern daß das Seyn in Nichts, und das Nichts in Seyn, – nicht übergeht, – sondern übergegangen ist' (HGW, II. 44; L, I, 67). Yet the two terms are not identical; they are to be distinguished absolutely. The immediate happening that has been discovered after the fact is not simply a collapse into an undifferentiated whole but has involved a movement (*Bewegung*), a becoming (*Werden*). Hegel uses the past tense of *übergehen* not because it is something that is not there at all, but because the transition is evident only in its result. The immediacy of the transition hides it from reflective thought at the moment of its happening. In thinking one thought, one has simply found oneself thinking another without any sense of how that had occurred. Thought becomes aware after the fact that a transition has taken place. When thought has differentiated this transition from both its starting point (for example *Seyn*) and its result (*Nichts*), it can be given the name *Werden*. This new term then becomes the basis for further development.

This early passage suggests that the categories or terms that appear in Hegel's *Logik* do not signify ontological reality as that which comprehends all things visible and invisible, but rather signify transitions of thought. For in describing the transitions from *Seyn* to *Nichts* and *vice versa*, Hegel appeals not to some independent reality sensed or intuited, but to the operations of intuiting and of thinking – *Auschauen* and *Denken*. The *Uebergehen* has occurred within those operations that he later characterized in the psychology of intelligence.⁷ Since each intellectual transition passes from something determinate to something else, the name for that transition (or becoming) will reflect that determination. Indeed, since a transition can be recognized only after it has happened, different conceptual categories will appear as the logic proceeds.

The changes introduced into the second chapter suggest that Hegel had

not followed this programme consistently in the *Logik's* first edition. There *das Nichts* had been posited in *Daseyn*, and it was this reflective determination that required the complementary thought of *Nichtdaseyn* or *Andersseyn*. The difference that *Realität* introduces is not the result of a simple transition, but has been posited by reflection when it added to the immediate content of *Daseyn* its remembered parentage. The move came from outside of the immediate concept.

In the second edition, the logical development is more subtle. *Daseyn* is an immediate concept, whose mediating (*das Werden*) has disappeared from view. To define it, thought simply places it beside the only other immediate concept it yet has: *Seyn*. *Seyn* was completely indeterminate; *Daseyn* is somewhat qualified. *Qualität* does not presuppose the contrast between *Daseyn* and *Nichtdaseyn* as *Andersseyn* had done. It is rather the result of a first hesitant transition from the immediacy of *Daseyn*. Similarly *ein Anderes* now names the result of a different immediate transition that occurs when *Etwas* is thought; the transition itself is named *Veränderung* (L, I, 103). The *Logik* then goes on to *Andersseyn*, *Ansich-seyn* and *Seyn-für-anderes*.⁸

II

Because Hegel discriminates between the immediate transitions that occur in the logic of being and more reflective considerations, his logic cannot leave the science of pure thought at the level of simply thinking thoughts and then passing over to other thoughts. A stream of consciousness is quite different from a systematic development. Indeed the category *Werden* is identified because subsequent thought has noticed its having passed over from one term to its contrary. Holding the first thought together with the second so that their opposition and the transition from one to the other is noticed is not a function of what is immediate. It involves reflection on what has happened – a process of determining what is essential. As Henrich has recognized, the description of the logic of being requires the use of operations that are fully characterized only in the logic of essence.⁹

Reflection, writes Hegel, is 'die Bewegung des Werdens und Übergehens, das in sich selbst bleibt' (HGW, II. 249).¹⁰ Rather than simply passing over from one thought to another, it persists through the transition, so that the difference is only a show, and what is essential is what is common.

In the immediacy of being, as we have seen, the transition is not something recognized in its occurrence, but only after it has happened. Therefore the commonness that reflection posits is not immediately evident but is retrospectively introduced by bringing the starting point and

the result together into a synthesis. This act of synthesis cancels the transition in which something has passed over to something else. But since that which differentiates the starting point from the result is contrary to the commonness implicit in the synthesis, each of the terms in its distinctness is also considered negatively.

Reflection, then, never simply accepts what is presented to it. It takes both its terms and the transitions of thought differently from the way they show themselves. This negative approach to its content conceals the positivity implicit in the act of synthesis. Reflection uses an immediate synthetic act to evaluate critically what is shown to it, and to determine the essence that is not immediately present.

The double character of reflection as both explicitly negative and implicitly positive contrasts with transition, which, as immediate, is explicitly positive but, as passing over to something else, is implicitly negative. Through this contrast it can be characterized more precisely.

Hegel does so through three stages of his analysis. In the first place, reflection presupposes that there is something positive – an essence – that underlies the differences, and therefore it posits a relation between the two terms. The relation is placed in the terms by reflection – is posited – in such a way that each term in turn posits, or requires, its contrary.¹¹ Thus the categories of reflection are not taken simply each on its own account, but each embodies a reference to its counterpart.

The fact that reflection posits and presupposes something positive and does so with respect to that which, though immediate, had been taken in a negative way has a self-reflexive implication. For reflection recognizes that its own operation is inherent neither in the immediate transition nor in the presupposed relation. It is rather external to both. In other words the negativity that is explicit in the immediate content of reflection rebounds to characterize reflection itself.

This has a significant consequence for reflection: as external to that upon which it reflects it is not inherently determined by it. Therefore what it posits and presupposes may not be what is in fact essential. In other words its act of synthesis does not inevitably make explicit the inherent positive relation that persists through the transition. Reflection requires in addition principles that on the one hand will justify its conclusions concerning what is essential, and that on the other are functions of its own reflective dynamic. These principles will determine both the way reflection operates and the positive content of reflection's object.

Hegel develops these determinations of reflection – which at the same time are the essentials of its own operations – through the second chapter of *Die Lehre vom Wesen*. Identity, difference, diversity, opposition and contradiction lead to the ultimate determining principle, or ground – that which provides a sufficient reason for its conclusions.

Under this interpretation, Hegel's three sections on positing reflection,

external reflection and determining reflection do not describe three species of reflection, each of which operates according to distinct principles. Three features of any reflection, they have become progressively identified as reflection has become more thoroughly self-reflexive. The full operation of reflection synthesizes what appears immediately as diverse, thereby positing and presupposing a common essence; in itself it is external to its subject matter; but it uses as its principle of determination the fundamental laws of thought.¹²

This characterization of reflection has a significant implication for our project: if reflection is external to its subject matter, then a crucial distinction is introduced between the two. For that subject matter is simply presented as diverse and different. Any inherent transition has disappeared from view. Ambiguity thus arises. When reflection synthesizes different thoughts, is it bringing together things that already have some inherent relation, or is it arbitrarily integrating a diverse multitude? The subsequent use of the determinations of reflection does not suffice to differentiate what is genuinely essential from what is accidental and contingent. For any thorough use of the determinations of reflection, Hegel argues, will inevitably lead to an explicit contradiction. And while a contradiction may be used as evidence of the falseness of one's premises, it may also be a stage on the way to discovering the grounds of the contradiction – to discovering the essence that underlies the initial relation. Which option one chooses will depend on whether one is convinced that there is an inherent relation to be explicated or not; and that conviction begs the question that is to be decided through the contradiction.

Reflection, then, in that it is external to its subject matter, is intrinsically conditioned by contingency.¹³ Self-reflexivity can become aware of that contingency, but it is impotent to overcome it. Since it remains external to its subject matter even in being self-reflexive, it can never ensure that its reflection is a direct function of that subject matter either in its original synthesis or in its determining operation.

III

We have distinguished the inherent transitions of becoming from the posited externality of reflection, as was required by dialectical development (see *L*, I, 109). But instead of achieving systematic integrity, the two have fallen apart into diverse operations of thought. Transitions are immediate and inherent, but are noticed only after they have occurred. Because reflection is subsequent and synthetic, it is necessarily external to the relations it considers. If this were all, Hegel would be left with

the perpetually incomplete dialectic of Sartre in which the *pour soi* (or reflection) can never catch up with the *en soi* (or immediacy).¹⁴

But this is not all; for both the immediate transition and the external reflection are operations of thought. As such they are moments within a comprehensive context. If the nature of that context can be carefully individuated and thus distinguished from its two operations, then we will have established not only the inherent integrity of dialectical development but also the systematic nature of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*.

Earlier we identified the subject of the transitions of becoming as the intelligence of Hegel's psychology. Intelligence is also the agent of reflection. What the *Logik* requires to be complete, then, is a discussion of intelligence as the comprehensive context of both transition and reflection – the context that determines the one to be immediate and the other to be external to that immediacy. To this context, Hegel gives the name *Begriff*.¹⁵

Henrich by-passes the logic of concept in his discussion of method because the two concepts of *Allgemeinheit* and *Besonderheit* are only contraries and do not incorporate the full weight of contradiction.¹⁶ But the act of conceiving does not involve simply generalizing and specifying – those acts named by the terms 'universality' and 'particularity'. Conceiving is the comprehensive operation of intelligence that determines itself by specifying its own moments. The negative moment of specifying can itself be specified. As contrary to generality, it is not itself a concept. Since it cannot be thought, it can only be indicated. By applying the particularizing act self-referentially, thought no longer thinks, but only refers. And it refers to a singular individuality. 'Die sich auf sich selbst beziehende Bestimmtheit ist die Einzelheit' (*HW*, 12.43). The moment of pure reference entails as its counterpart the self-referential discrimination of its contradictory – generalizing thought which now lacks concrete reference. Universality is something purely abstract, lacking the concreteness of immediate individuality. The contradictions in *Die Lehre vom Begriff*, then, are abstract universality and individuality.

Conceiving is not a synthetic operation bringing together an externally related transition and reflection – it does not reproduce at a higher level the activity of reflective thought.¹⁷ Quite the contrary. It considers itself – the comprehensive totality of intelligence already present. And it discriminates within itself two contradictory moments: the pure immediacy of its dynamic that, as individual, can only be referentially indicated; and its generalizing synthesis or abstract universality. It disjoins transition and reflection¹⁸ by self-referentially individuating its own disjunctive operation. Through applying disjunctive inference to itself, it isolates the immediate transitions of the logic of being, positing them as moments of its own content; and it identifies the external syntheses of reflection with the abstract universality that is the other moment of the disjunction. The

two contradictories are in fact products of a single act which does not create itself thereby, but only renders itself more determinate.¹⁹

Within this general context conceiving is another name for understanding.²⁰ When it is not used self-referentially to discriminate its own operations, it may result in the fixity of dead thought. When applied consistently and thoroughly, even to itself, understanding articulates the self-determining nature of comprehensive intelligence.²¹

Conceptual thought disjoins its immediate transitions and its reflective syntheses – its individuality and its abstract universality. This initial act grounds the logical development, for reflection and the immediacy it reflects upon are the two contradictory sides of a single conceptual totality. When intelligence explicitly knows itself as the subject of the *Logik*, the logical development ceases to be arbitrary and relative, but becomes necessary and absolute.

IV

Hegel's reference to dialectic in the second edition of the *Logik* uses this tri-partite schema. Dialectical development is contrasted to metaphysical and critical philosophy because it differentiates what is inherent from what is posited, 'wie die Bestimmungen als im Begriffe und wie sie als gesetzt oder als seiend-für-Anderes sind' (*L*, I, 109). In positing this distinction between immediate transitions and reflective positings, dialectic also disjoins them as contradictory moments within its own dynamic.

In the *Logik* all three moments – transition, reflection and disjunction – are operations of intelligence or pure thought. If this is the only description of dialectic, Marx's response is justified: Hegel needs to be put back on his feet. For the realm of pure thought appears to have nothing to do with the material reality that is other than, and therefore outside of, thought's comprehension.²²

For Marx the immediate transitions are not intellectual but material. What simply happens is a temporal, material process, intuited directly by the senses. Reflection is the response of thought to that matter, and is therefore derivative. As external it is bedevilled by contingency; it does not determine what is genuinely essential, but produces rather an ideology. It reflects what only appears essential to a finite consciousness.

Praxis takes over from understanding the function of disjunctive integration.²³ In a single act it disjoins the immediacy of historical action and the reflective syntheses of abstract thought. Consciously revolutionary, it is aware of both starting point and result while immersed in an immediate transition of history. It is dialectical because it maintains the radical disjunction that combines 'both/and' and 'either/or'.

No less than Marx, however, Hegel recognizes the bare externality and

radical contingency of the world of nature and of history. In the philosophies of nature and of spirit, he shows how external natural transitions in their contingency may be reflectively appropriated by thought to determine their relative necessity. But for a science to reach true conclusions more is required. The disjunction of immediacy and reflection needs to be the product of a self-determining agent; the immediacy of nature in its contingent externality must be individuated not simply in a finite moment of praxis, but comprehensively in all time and space. For the intelligent agent needs to know that his disjunctive operations reproduce the comprehensive agency that on the one hand grounds nature's temporal processes and that on the other generates synthetic unities in nature and history.

This is why Hegel requires the Christian doctrines of creation and reconciliation. The former posits the transitions of nature; the latter identifies finite individuals with its own dynamic. Without the clear disjunction of these two cosmic operations, Hegel's system ceases to be absolute, and dialectic is no longer 'the only true method' (*HGW*, 11.25; *L*, I, 36) but only one ideology among many.

Notes

1 But see *Enz.*, § 81 (first edition, § 15), where dialectic takes its place with speculative reason and understanding as one of the 'sides' of logical form.

2 For the second edition of Book I we will use Lasson's edition (Hamburg: Meiner, 1967) (*L*, I). Otherwise all references to the *Logik* will be to G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bände 11 und 12 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1978, 1981) (*HGW*, 11 and 12).

3 Some intermediate stages in the development from the first edition to the second are found in the different orders for the categories in the first and second editions of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften (Enz.)*.

4 What is at first curious is this use of *gesetzt* in characterizing the development *an sich*. One recognizes the distinction between the passive '*a ist mit b gesetzt*' and the active '*a setzt b*', and sees the parallel to '*geht hervor*' and '*bringt hervor*'. The former in both pairs appears to be something that happens immediately, whereas the latter is determined reflectively.

5 It is the merit of D. Henrich's paper 'Anfang und Methode der Logik', in *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt a/M. Suhrkamp, 1971), 73–94, that he draws this distinction clearly and uses it to explicate the beginning of the *Logik*.

6 M. Miller has demonstrated the importance of *Uebergehen* for Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion. See his 'Der Uebergang, Schleiermachers Theologie des Reiches Gottes', diss. theol., Heidelberg.

7 See *Enz.*, § 446–§ 450 and § 465–§ 468, and my commentary on this section in *On Hegel's Logic* (Atlantic City, Humanities, 1981), 6–21. Once one moves beyond the pure immediacy of *Seyn* and *Nichts* the pure immediacy of *Anschauen* is not an appropriate characterization of the operations of intelligence.

8 The development in 'Etwas und ein Anderes' is more complicated than usual,

suggesting that Hegel had not sufficiently worked through the implications of fitting the earlier material to this frame.

This will have to suffice as an explanation of the changes introduced into the second edition. What is required is a full-length study and double commentary of the whole book.

9 See 'Anfang und Methode der Logik'.

10 Reference should be made to several valuable commentaries on 'Reflection': D. Henrich, 'Hegels Logik der Reflexion', in *Hegel im Kontext*, 95–156, and G. Di Giovanni, 'Reflection and Contradiction. A Commentary on Some Passages of Hegel's *Science of Logic*', *Hegel-Studien*, 1973, 131–61 [reprinted below, pp. 356–82. R.S.]. By relating reflection more directly to immediate transitions, my interpretation differs from theirs. See *On Hegel's Logic*, 63–84.

11 Note the final sentence in the quotation from *L*, I, 109 above, which refers to Positive/Negative and Cause/Effect as each showing the other in itself.

12 See *HGW*, 11.15 (*L* I, 23): 'Die Logik dagegen kann keine dieser Formen der Reflexion oder Regeln und Gesetze des Denkens voraussetzen, denn sie machen einen Theil ihres Inhalts aus und haben erst innerhalb ihrer begründet zu werden.' In identifying the three operations as functions of one reflection and not of different ones, my interpretation differs from those of Henrich and di Giovanni.

13 Here, then, I indicate my conviction that the *äussere Reflexion* of the *Lehre vom Wesen* is the same as the *äusserliche Reflexion* of the *Vorrede* to the first edition: 'Die Philosophie, indem sie Wissenschaft seyn soll, kann, wie ich anderwärts erinnert habe, hierzu ihre Methode nicht von einer untergeordnete Wissenschaft, wie die Mathematik ist, borgen, so wenig als es bey kategorischen Versicherungen innerer Anschauung bewenden lassen, oder sich des Raisonnements aus Gründen der äussern Reflexion bedienen' (*HGW*, 11.7). As I will subsequently show, the difference is not in the operation of reflection itself, but whether it occurs determined within the fundamental systematic integrity of conceptual thought, or whether it is an element of arbitrary reasoning (*Räsonnement*). While I here take issue with one element of his argument, may I pay tribute to W. Jaeschke's 'Äusserliche Reflexion und immanente Reflexion', *Hegel-Studien*, Band 13, 85–117, which has performed a signal service in tracing the development of Hegel's use of *Reflexion*.

14 This is the proper reference for Sartre's distinction rather than the *Phänomenologie*. For the *Phänomenologie* distinguishes *an sich* from *für es*, not from *für sich*. Since French, like English, cannot so easily distinguish between the two latter phrases, Sartre has collapsed them into one, and made *pour soi* self-reflexive. But neither *für es* nor *für sich* is strictly self-reflexive. The former is simply a consciousness of something, and the latter is a German idiom: 'Wir sagen, daß etwas für sich ist, insofern als es das Andersein, seine Beziehung und Gemeinschaft mit Anderem aufhebt, sie zurückgestossen, davon abstrahiert hat. Das Andere ist ihm nur *als* ein Aufgehobenes, *als sein Moment*; das Fürsichsein besteht darin, über die Schranke, über sein Andersein so hinausgegangen zu sein, daß es als diese Negation die unendliche *Rückkehr* in sich ist' (*L*, I, 147–8). This idiom does not require reflection, and thus Hegel discusses *Fürsichseyn* in the logic of being and not in that of essence.

15 See *HGW*, 12.11: 'Der Begriff ist von dieser Seite zunächst überhaupt als *das Dritte* zum *Seyn* und *Wesen*, zum *Unmittelbaren* und zur *Reflexion* anzusehen. Seyn und Wesen sind insofern die Momente seines *Werdens*; er aber ist ihre *Grundlage* und *Wahrheit*, als die Identität, in welcher sie untergegangen und enthalten sind.'

16 *Hegel im Kontext*, 98f.

17 That philosophy requires more than simply reflection is expressed in an early text of Hegel's reproduced by Rosenkranz. 'Die Philosophie hat nämlich als die Wissenschaft der Wahrheit das unendliche Erkennen oder das Erkennen des Absoluten zum Gegenstande. Diesem Erkennen aber oder der *Speculation* steht das endliche Erkennen oder die *Reflexion* gegenüber.' *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 190. By the time of the larger logic, infinite knowing is no longer the counterpart of reflection, but has taken its place in the preparatory text of the *Phänomenologie*. Speculation, on the other hand, has become the comprehensive logical operation of the *Begriff*.

18 *HGW*, 12.49: 'Das Negative am Allgemeinen, wodurch dieses ein *Besonderes* ist, wurde vorhin als der Doppelschein bestimmt; insofern es Scheinen nach *Innen* ist, bleibt das Besondere ein Allgemeines; durch das Scheinen nach *Aussen* ist es *bestimmtes*; die Rückkehr dieser Seite in das Allgemeine ist die gedoppelte, *entweder* durch die *Abstraction*, welche dasselbe weglässt, und zur *höhern* und *höchsten Gattung* aufsteigt, *oder* aber durch die *Einzelheit*, zu welcher das Allgemeine in der Bestimmtheit selbst, heruntersteigt.'

19 See *HGW*, 12.124-5: 'Der disjunktive Schluss ist überhaupt in der Bestimmung der *Allgemeinheit*, seine Mitte ist das A als *Gattung* und als vollkommen *Bestimmtes*; durch diese Einheit ist jener vorher innre Inhalt auch *Gesetzt*, und umgekehrt das Gesetzseyn oder die Form ist nicht die äusserliche negative Einheit gegen ein gleichgültiges Daseyn, sondern identisch mit jenem gediegenen Inhalte. Die ganze Formbestimmung des Begriffs ist in ihrem bestimmten Unterschied und zugleich in der einfachen Identität des Begriffs gesetzt.'

20 *HGW*, 12.32: 'Durch den *Verstand* pflegt das Vermögen der Begriffe überhaupt ausgedrückt zu werden.' *Ibid.*, 41: 'Es ist aber ferner als die unendliche Kraft des verstandes zu achten, das Concrete in die abstracten Bestimmtheiten zu trennen, und die Tiefe des Unterschieds zu fassen, welche allein zugleich die Macht ist, die ihren Übergang bewirkt.'

21 Because the comprehensive totality of conceptual thought is self-determining, Hegel withdrew that predicate from the immediate category *Daseyn* when revising the *Logik*. For, 'in der Sphäre des Seyns ist das *Sichbestimmen* des Begriffs selbst nur erst *an sich* – so heißt es ein Übergehen' (*L*, I, 109).

22 For example, Hegel 'hat nur den *abstrakten, logischen, spekulativen* Ausdruck für die Bewegung der Geschichte gefunden, die noch nicht *wirkliche* Geschichte des Menschen als eines vorausgesetzten Subjekts, sondern erst *Erzeugungsakt, Entstehungsgeschichte* des Menschen ist'. 'Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte (1844)', in *Marx-Engels Werke*, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil (Berlin, Dietz, 1968), 570 [reprinted in Volume I, pp. 163-85; p. 165. R.S.].

23 See 'Thesen über Feuerbach', 2: 'In der Praxis muß der Mensch die Wahrheit, das heißt die Wirklichkeit und Macht, die Diesseitigkeit seines Denkens beweisen.' *Marx-Engels Werke*, Band III (1969), 533.

Reflection and contradiction: a commentary on some passages of Hegel's *Science of Logic*

George di Giovanni

I

Eduard von Hartmann complained in the nineteenth century that it was impossible to argue against the Hegelians. Since they had abandoned the law of contradiction, they had removed all limits from thought. It would have been pointless, therefore, on the part of any critic ever to accuse them of being *wrong*, for there was no conclusion that (granted their standpoint) could not be derived from any principle whatsoever.¹

Hartmann's criticism, of course, is much too facile – at least if directed specifically against Hegel. It is true that in some passages of his writings contradiction is said to be the soul of reality. If one were to pay attention to these passages alone, the conclusion might well be drawn that Hegel has denied *tout court* (as Hartmann would have it) the traditional principle of contradiction. But there are numerous other texts in which Hegel claims, with no apparent awareness of being inconsistent, that certain forms that the object of consciousness or consciousness itself assume in the course of their development collapse because they have incurred contradiction. In these passages Hegel is clearly making use of the principle of contradiction as traditionally understood. And if *they* are taken as normative for an interpretation of Hegel's thought, the latter cannot be said to have departed (at least not in its basic principles) from traditional metaphysics.²

Which set of texts should be taken as normative? It is the question that defines 'the problem of contradiction' in Hegelian interpretation. In general critical opinion has been in favour of the second set.³ Hegel (so it has been generally claimed, albeit with varying degrees of intensity) has never denied the principle of contradiction. On the contrary, he has vindicated its validity once more by arguing that the concepts which the understanding (i.e. traditional metaphysics) believes free of contradiction

do incur it *in fact*; and that they must be overcome and replaced by new ones. The categories of the *Logic* were intended by Hegel to provide precisely the new kind of conceptual unity (viz. one of reason) which alone resolves the contradiction incurred by the more traditional concepts. Looked at from the point of view of the understanding, the new categories have the *appearance* of being contradictory. This appearance, however, is a reflection of the narrowness of the understanding – not of any failure on their part. In brief, far from denying the principle of contradiction, Hegel has only argued that there is a contradiction where previously nobody suspected one; and that there is none where previously one was held to be. In the texts in which the positive value of contradiction is extolled, the term 'contradiction' should be replaced by the more appropriate 'opposition'.

In general such seems to be among scholars the majority opinion. It should be clear from the start that we for our part do not share it. Not that we would want to claim that Hegel has denied *tout court* the principle of contradiction. Our contention is that there is a sense in which contradiction is for Hegel *ultimate*; and that the significance, therefore, of the traditional principle must be radically qualified when applied to Hegelian dialectic. Accordingly, the first set of texts on contradiction should be taken as strongly as possible; and it is possible to reconcile them with the second set, and also meet the charges levelled against Hegel by critics of Eduard von Hartmann's type, only when they are so taken. For our assertion to be made good, a thorough study of the Hegelian System would be required: a task hardly to be attempted within the limits of an essay. We can try to defend it, however, by analysing a key text of the *Logic*;⁴ and showing that it implies a radically new understanding of the meaning and the importance of contradiction. A strategy of this sort has its obvious limitations. It can only succeed within the limits of the text chosen as the critical touchstone. The defence that it affords, therefore, must be open to revisions that might have to be made with the analysis of other texts. However, granted the dearth of *detailed* commentaries on Hegel's logical writings, the close study of a single and very difficult passage of the *Logic* should only be welcome.

The passage that we have in mind is to be found at the beginning of the *Logic of Essence*. It contains an analysis of *reflection*. It is a crucial passage, because at this point of the *Logic* the object has ceased to be (as it was during the *Logic of Being*) a succession of more or less discrete determinations, the unity of which remained outside of them. It has now explicitly assumed a persistent, inner identity (later to be defined as substance and then as subject), of which the determinations of being that made their appearance in the preceding dialectic are reinterpreted as the outward showing. At this point of the *Logic*, in other words, the object has begun to exhibit a *reflective* structure, in virtue of which it can

perform *vis-à-vis* its own manifestations the synthesizing function for which thought was solely responsible in the dialectic of being. The object has thus begun to make its own, qua object, the reflective movement of the thought expressing it; and the stage is set for the final interpretation of the immediacy of being with which the *Logic* begins as a phenomenon of thought reflecting upon itself. But it is significant that Hegel, as a continuation of the dialectic of reflection, and together with an analysis of *identity* and *difference*, also examines the notion of *contradiction*. It is only fair to expect that any new meaning that contradiction assumes in Hegelian philosophy should especially emerge in a passage in which Hegel considers the notion *ex professo*; and which happens to be, moreover, so crucial for the development of the *Logic* as a whole.

In the text that we are going to study, Hegel proceeds from an analysis of reflection to a discussion of what he calls the 'essential determinations' (*die Wesenheiten*). They include identity, difference, diversity, opposition and contradiction. For our part, since the dialectic of reflection is so difficult as to appear at times even cryptic, we shall reverse somewhat Hegel's own order. We shall start with *identity* and *difference* (and the two parallel categories in the *Logic of Being*, viz. *something* and *other*); and then, after we have gained a general idea of Hegel's argument, make our way back to the *reflection* which is the ground of the two *Wesenheiten*. Finally, we shall conclude with some remarks on *contradiction* to which the whole essay will naturally lead.

II

We first turn our attention to *difference* and its corresponding category of *other*. In order to understand the two categories, Hegel insists that we overcome the usual habit of simply presupposing as already given *two* objects standing next to one another, and then declaring that one is 'other than' the next, or that each is 'different from' the other (I, 104–5). When we use 'other' and 'difference' in this way, the two categories become subjective rubrics of thought under which we subsume (by way of a reflection extrinsic to the objects under consideration) an already given multiplicity of things – but which do not qualify these latter precisely as they are in themselves. Hegel's aim, on the other hand, is to establish by means of the two categories the *possibility* for there being in the first place a multiplicity of objects. Other and difference are no longer to be considered, therefore, as subjective aids to an observer contrasting and comparing two given objects; but as expressing a reflective movement to be found in reality itself, and which allows it to exhibit a multiplicity of determinations. Other, accordingly, must be understood *in itself* – in the abstract sense of 'otherness as such': 'Das Andere [ist] zu nehmen, als

isoliert, in Beziehung auf sich selbst; *abstrakt* als das Andere; τὸ ἕτερον des Plato' (I, 105). And Hegel then proceeds to clarify the meaning of the passage by citing nature (in the determinations of space, time and matter) as the concrete object which other signifies *in abstract* (I, 105). Apparently Hegel has in mind the peculiar feature of spatio-temporal objects of not admitting absolute limits. All such objects are always liable of being determined otherwise than they are at any given moment. They are characterized by an element of indefiniteness. There is no lapse of time, for instance, or span of space which cannot be indefinitely subdivided – that is to say, indefinitely redefined in terms of an ever-changing number of constituent parts. A spatio-temporal object, therefore, cannot be said to be (in so far as it is affected by space and time) strictly self-identical. It is always other than it might appear to be at first: its nature consists in 'being-other-than'. It is 'das Andere an ihm selbst, d.i. das Andere seiner selbst' (I, 105). It is this peculiarity of spatio-temporal objects which Hegel apparently wants to express by means of the category of the other: 'Das Andere für sich ist . . . also das in sich schlechthin. Ungleiche, sich Negierende, das sich Verändernde' (I, 106).

A parallel claim is made with regard to difference – except that in its case the concrete image which Hegel seems to have in mind is the one of a process in which the distinction between starting point and end is both granted and denied. By difference we mean 'der Unterschied an und für sich, nicht Unterschied durch ein Äusserliches, sondern *sich auf sich beziehender*, also *einfacher Unterschied*' (II, 32). Instead of assuming two already given terms, A and Not-A, and declaring them to lie outside one another, Hegel is urging us to bracket the terms as fixed points, and direct attention to the transition from one to the other. We must conceptualize a point which is neither A nor Not-A: i.e. not a *point* at all, but a transition between the two. And it is such an 'in-between' situation which we must abstract and consider as an object in itself: as *einfacher Begriff*, to use Hegel's phrase. Its essence consists in its being *other than* any limit one might want to impose upon it. It is a simple 'not', or 'other in and for itself'.

The abstraction which Hegel is urging us to perform is a very important one, because his whole metaphysical standpoint rests on it. It is crucial, therefore, that we immediately come to terms with an obvious objection. Is the abstraction possible to carry out? Can one really think the mere lack of all definite limits – simple indefiniteness? It would seem that any attempt at bracketing in an object all definite limits would lead to the total disappearance of any object whatsoever, for the desired object would fail to offer any steady term of signification for the intention directed towards it. The intended object, in other words, would offer no single point at which one could even begin to signify it. Like Zeno's arrow, the intention aimed at it could not even *begin* to get to it. The language

which Hegel uses to express 'otherness as such' seems indeed already to betray this failure. However hard he might try to express the mere lack of all determinations, it is none the less always a well-defined object (viz. one which he declares to be neither A nor B, but a situation in between) which he describes. He seems to hypostatize, in other words, the situation of indefiniteness, and to treat it exactly as he would any other well-determined object. It is 'das Andere für sich' which Hegel wants to express, and it is to be understood 'als isoliert, in Beziehung auf sich selbst' – i.e. precisely as any other substantial, well-determined object.

Now, Hegel would have no wish to deny the strength of the objection. On the contrary, his aim is to establish that one cannot even try to conceptualize 'otherness as such' or pure difference without having already made a return to identity. And he capitalizes on what has just been advanced as a betrayal of failure to make his point. It is only with reference to a steady, self-identical point of reference which provides a substratum for an innumerable number of unsteady determinations that one can conceive a sphere of indefiniteness at all. Hegel's preoccupation, however, is to avoid the usual way in which (supposedly out of respect for the principle of contradiction) identity is introduced at the side of difference, as if it entailed a mere self-reference which shuns all multiplicity, and to which difference must be added as an extrinsic element. The usual practice, in other words, is to conceive identity first as a mere self-reference devoid of content, and then to add to it a multiplicity of determinations which leave the identity untouched (II, 29–31). The idea of a 'thing-in-itself' (*Ding-an-sich*) is for Hegel a case in point. By means of such an idea one presupposes a substratum for all determinations possessing a merely formal identity devoid of content. A moment of indefiniteness (which allows for a multiplicity of determinations and hence for a concrete content) is then introduced – but relegated to the level of appearance and never really qualifying the object considered precisely as it is in itself (viz. as a self-identical thing-in-itself) (I, 108).

Rather than objecting to Hegel, therefore, for having introduced in other and difference a note of self-identity in spite of his avowed intention of expressing with those two categories the lack of any point of reference, we should concentrate instead on the step whereby the reintroduction of identity is expressly performed. The essential stipulation, of course, is that identity be not merely *added* to other and difference, but *derived* from them. The most explicit text in which Hegel attempts the derivation is to be found in the first book of the *Logik* (I, 106).

The other is what is being considered in the text; and Hegel is at pains to remove from it any steady point of reference. The other is that which is absolutely dissimilar with itself ('das in sich schlechthin Ungleiche'): the continuous abrogation of any would-be definite limit (the 'an sich Negierende'); in a word, a situation of pure change ('das sich Verän-

dernde'). Its instability is so thorough that one cannot even speak of a definite term towards which the change might be directed. It has nowhere to go, except itself: 'dasjenige, in welches es sich veränderte, ist das Andere'. To revert once again to the image of a movement from point A to point B, to obtain the other Hegel has bracketed *both A and B*: the term *ad quem* of the movement as well as the term *a quo*. The instability that results is due not merely to the fact that a previous determination has been left behind; but also to the absence of any other determination at which the movement could be brought to a halt. The situation that Hegel is trying to express, therefore, is not to be confused with the 'tendential being' of the scholastics. Although there is definitely present in this latter a moment of instability (for tendential being only *strives* after its being, and it *is not yet all that it should be*), the instability is mitigated none the less by the presence throughout the striving under the form of a directing principle of the goal to be achieved. Or in more general terms, in any movement of 'transcendence' (viz. of leaving behind a starting point for the sake of a point-beyond) the instability that results from abandoning the previously given term is contained by the presence as goal of the new term towards which the transcending is to be accomplished. In Hegel's other, on the other hand, there is no such stabilizing factor. The term *ad quem* of the movement entailed by the notion is dropped as well as the term *a quo*. The other is the other *tout court*: 'es geht daher in demselben *nur mit sich zusammen*'.

Hegel's stress on the identification of the other, however, is not the whole story. Indeed, the text we have just referred to is of special importance only because it is obvious that in it Hegel is using other with *two* different meanings. According to one, the other means the situation of sheer instability just described. The object that it signifies, however, is also *identical with itself* – as Hegel puts it. It then appears as something substantial, for which to be perpetually 'other than' any momentary determination one may posit in it *is its determining factor*.⁵ The other, that is to say, can also be understood as a sort of *determination*.⁶ (Thus, 'das Andere, das sonst weiter keine Bestimmung hat': clearly, 'das Andere' is being treated as a 'Bestimmung'). But how can the other be taken in this sense; and how can Hegel manage to shift from one meaning of the term to the other?

Apparently, Hegel's point is that in an object in which determinations vanish in the very act of being posited, the very notion of differentiation ceases to have an absolute meaning. As Hegel puts it when considering difference, any distinction introduced in the object between one moment and another collapses as soon as it is posited, for its perpetual 'being-other-than-itself' makes it immaterial whether one considers it as determined one way or another. In positing one determination, one might just as well have posited any other. The result is 'ein Unterscheiden, wodurch

nichts unterschieden wird, sondern das unmittelbar in sich selbst zusammenfällt' (II, 27). And indeed, if it is true that one cannot introduce any limit within an object (say, a) without immediately admitting, in the very act of positing it, that some other (say, b) would just as well be possible, and then again some other *ad infinitum* (. . . c, d, e, f, . . .), it follows that the object itself is not absolutely affected by any of them. Or take as example the phenomenon of self-consciousness (which Hegel has certainly in mind when discussing difference). It is admitted that in achieving the object one has already made a return to the subject (for it is the *self* which is achieved in the object); but again, in returning to the subject, one has only succeeded once more in objectifying it. To be subject is already to be object; and to be object, subject. The distinction between the two terms is thus strictly relativized.⁷ *The result is a situation of indifference vis-à-vis any determination. And it is upon this indifference that Hegel fastens his reflection in order to reintroduce identity in the object.* Since the object cannot be identified with any determination one may wish to posit within it (for its structure is such that any posited determination would be abolished as soon as it was posited), it acquires relatively to it as well as to any other a self-identity of its own. But what kind of self-identity? Precisely: *one of indifference vis-à-vis any determination with which it might be momentarily identified.* Thus, in the phenomenon of self-consciousness in which 'being the object' or 'being the subject' are the only two determinations in question, a basic unity is revealed which transcends both subject and object and of which the two are only passing determinations.⁸ The new unity *transcends* them precisely in the sense that it remains indifferent to either. The other signifies for Hegel quite in abstract such a state of indifference. It signifies the object's remaining *other than* any determination posited within it. Paradoxically, therefore, 'otherness' becomes a determination while relativizing the value that determinations have within the object. It becomes a determination, however, only in the precise sense just defined: viz. by establishing the object as a persistent centre of reference in virtue of an indifference to determinations.⁹

A persistent, self-identical substratum has thus been reintroduced in the object. Since it has no specific content of its own, it can be qualified now in one way, not in another. However, it has not been merely presupposed; nor is its indifference due to the fact that it remains outside the unsteady stream of passing qualifications which the other (at one level of meaning) signifies. Rather, it is the same movement in the object (as expressed by other and difference) which results *both* in the collapse within the object of any would-be ultimate determination *and* in the appearance in it (in the disappearing of the determinations) of a steady, self-identical point of reference (II, 26–7; 27–8). The movement ought to be carefully adverted to (even at the risk of being repetitious) because

Hegel's whole metaphysical standpoint depends on it. The peculiarity of its structure derives from Hegel's having withdrawn from it (his 'bracketing', as we have previously put it) both a point of departure and a point of arrival which could be conceived (supposedly) in independence of one another and of the movement itself. Essentially Hegel's move consists in the denial that the movement entails a moment of 'transcendence' – if by that term one means any reference by the movement to a term which lies outside of it and which could subsist apart from the movement itself. However, once this denial has been made, the categories into which movement is normally analysed acquire a meaning altogether new. The sense of 'arriving', for instance, must be radically qualified – for the effect of dropping from the signification of movement the presupposition of a starting point absolutely distinct from the final one can be no other than to extend indefinitely 'back' in the movement (i.e. in the direction where one would normally expect to find the starting point) the presence of the final term. In other words, in a movement in which 'on arriving' nothing definite can be said to have been left behind, 'arriving' can only mean a *return* to what was already present. And inversely, 'departing' too must acquire a new meaning once a point of arrival absolutely distinct from the starting point has been dropped. A 'going forward' which has nowhere in particular to go can be more than a movement towards what is already present: once again, a *return*. The whole movement can thus be described as a going forward which is just as well a coming back: and a coming back which is equally a going forward. There is no moment in it which cannot be taken both as arrival and departure: and both for the same reason.

A situation thus arises in the object which lends itself with equal validity to two antithetical interpretations – each yielding one of the two results in which Hegel is interested. The first is that the moment of 'otherness' has been *radicalized* to the point of becoming the other pure and simple. Accordingly, the object assumes the aspect of what Hegel also calls a *show*: a term aptly chosen, because it clearly expresses the total lack of substantiality to which the object has been reduced.¹⁰ It is no more possible to establish within it ultimate distinctions than it would be possible to delineate different parts in (say) a 'show of lights'. The object simply fails to offer any resistance to an observing regard: it dissolves into a mere play of lights.¹¹ On the other hand, precisely *because* the 'otherness' has been so thoroughly radicalized, the movement is forced to *turn upon itself*. The denial of an absolute distinction between point of departure and arrival simply prevents the movement from having quite left *any* point, or for that matter, from having quite arrived at any. *It persists, therefore, precisely as movement*. And it is in this way, as a motion turned upon itself (a *reflection* in which to arrive at the end is tantamount to having returned to the beginning), that the object acquires

once again a moment of substantiality. *It remains with itself* no matter which limited term one may want to abstract from it. In a word, it persists as *reflection* (II, 13).

A helpful way, perhaps, of pictorially representing the object as it emerges from Hegel's analysis is to imagine it as a spinning motion, the centrifugal force of which sorts out from it on the one hand an element of reflection (this is the moment of self-identity in the object: its persistence precisely as movement) and on the other a show of determinations (this is the element of pure 'otherness'). The one is sorted out at the same stroke as the other. In being pressed to an extreme, 'otherness' is transformed (*aufgehoben*) into the reflection of the object into itself. To quote again from the text with which the present discussion began: 'so ist es [viz. das sich Verändernde] gesetzt als in sich Reflektiertes mit Aufheben des Andersseins, mit sich identisches Etwas' (I, 106). Should the identity between show and reflection be obscured – should reflection be estranged from its own show – then the kind of 'transcendence' arises which Hegel is intent on avoiding. The moment of indefiniteness in the object would then be related to a steady point of reference as if the two lay outside one another – and one could not admit the presence of either without ignoring that of the other (cf. II, 3–4).

The identity, therefore, which Hegel develops is a far cry from the simple self-reference, shunning all multiplicity, usually signified by it. The *Ansichsein* of an object – i.e. its 'remaining-with-itself', or its persistence as a self-identical centre of reference – always contains *within* itself a moment of 'otherness', for it is first obtained only through the disappearing within it of any would-be ultimate distinction, or as Hegel puts it, through 'das Nichtsein des Andersseins' (I, 107). Identity only arises in the disappearance of distinction: 'es liegt diese reine Bewegung der Reflexion [in which identity consists] darin, in der das Andere nur als Schein, als unmittelbares Verschwinden auftritt' (II, 31). And Hegel argues that even the form under which the principle of identity has traditionally been couched should have indicated this much, for in the judgment 'A is A', a moment is implied ('A is —') in which the possibility of A's being other than itself is envisaged. As soon as the judgment is completed, and A is asserted to be itself, the element of non-identity is denied. None the less, it was implied, and it lingers on as a disappearing show ('die Verschiedenheit ist nur ein Verschwinden', II, 31).

The net result of Hegel's analysis, therefore, is the denial of a strict equivalence between principle of identity and principle of contradiction. While it is indeed true that '*Alles ist sich selbst gleich*', it does not follow that '*A kann nicht zugleich A und nicht A sein*'. On the contrary, in their being self-identical, all things entail a moment of non-identity. They all contain, therefore, a contradiction. Accordingly, the principle of contradiction should be reformulated to assert as a summary of the dialectic of

identity and difference that '*Alle Dinge sind an sich selbst widersprechend*' (II, 58). And Hegel adds: 'und zwar in dem Sinne, daß dieser Satz gegen die übrigen vielmehr die Wahrheit und das Wesen der Dinge ausdrücke' (II, 58).

It is this reformulation of the principle of contradiction which also allows Hegel to deal again, but from a radically different standpoint, with the problem of introducing determinateness in the idea of the Absolute with which both Spinoza and Leibniz (as Hegel well knew)¹² were especially concerned. How is it possible to mediate between the simplicity that the Absolute ought to have and the determinations attributed to it? How is it possible to claim *seriously* that the Absolute is both one and many, and yet not incur contradiction? Hegel has shown that it is neither possible nor desirable to avoid contradiction, for it is incurred even in the attempt at expressing pure identity and pure difference – two concepts which more obviously than any other should be completely free of it. Identity is found to contain difference, and difference identity. Both concepts incur contradiction. And the contradiction is made irreducible precisely because it is incurred by *both*. The movement, in other words, whereby one concept tends to disappear into its opposite is checked by the contrary tendency of the opposite to disappear back into it. It is impossible, therefore, to resolve the contradiction incurred by either simply by abolishing one concept in favour of its opposite, for the contradiction left behind by relinquishing one concept would be encountered again with equal force in the other. A point is thus achieved in the interplay between identity and difference in which *both* concepts are present – and each in spite of the contradiction which it still entails and which still tends to abolish it as a valid concept. *A unity of tension, in other words, is achieved between the two opposite concepts. And it is such a unity which defines, according to Hegel, the idea of the Absolute.*

In one of the earliest stages of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Hegel appeals to an image in his description of a thing in general which we do well to recall now, since it is a striking and concrete illustration of what Hegel has in mind.¹³ In the structure of a thing, Hegel claims, one can distinguish between two sorts of unity: an *exclusive* one (*ausschließende Einheit*) whereby the thing is a simple object from which the multiplicity of determinations must be removed (in this sense the thing transcends whatever quality one may attribute to it); and an *inclusive* one (*gleichgültige Einheit*) whereby the object becomes a passive medium indifferently receptive of a multiplicity of determinations. However (and this is the all-important point), for Hegel the truth of the thing consists in the identity between the two unities just defined. The essence of the thing is to be found at the point in which its identity *spreads out* in a multiplicity of determinations, and yet recoils from these back into its simple individuality. The thing is 'die Negation, wie sie sich auf das gleichgültige Element

bezieht und sich darin als eine Menge von Unterschieden ausbreitet; der Punkt der Einzelheit in dem Medium des Bestehens in die Vielheit ausstrahlend'.¹⁴ Should we call the simple unity of the thing its moment of *Fürsichsein* – the moment, that is, of its remaining identical with itself in abstraction from all determinations; and its passive receptivity to determinations its *Sein für Anderes*, then the truth of the thing consists in its 'remaining-with-itself' while losing itself in the 'otherness' of the determinations, and in its returning back to itself in thus losing itself: 'der Gegenstand ist vielmehr in einer und derselben Rücksicht das Gegenteil seiner selbst: für sich, insofern es für anderes, und für anderes, insofern er für sich ist'.¹⁵ It is such a movement of going out into 'otherness', and yet recoiling back into reflective unity, which constitutes for Hegel the basic outline of the life of the Absolute.

So far, however, we have considered the movement only as implied by the two essential determinations to which it gives rise, viz. identity and difference. We must now consider it in itself, and thereby gain yet a deeper understanding of what contradiction means for Hegel. We turn, therefore, to the dialectic of *reflection*.

III

(a) *Reflection as the identity of essence and show*

Identity and difference appear in the texts that we shall consider under a variety of forms: as reflection and show (II, 13 ff.), essence and being (see II, 3) (or immediacy),¹⁶ the essential and the unessential (II, 7–9). All these terms, however, should not be bewildering, for they are all expressions of the two moments of *Für-sich-sein* and *Sein-für-Anderes* to which reflection (which we must now try to understand as the essence of reality) gives rise. Particularly difficult, on the other hand, is Hegel's usage of the term 'reflection'. The term is used at times synonymously with *Für-sich-sein*; and at other times to signify the dialectical interplay of *Für-sich-sein* and *Sein-für-Anderes* which constitutes the *total* logical object.¹⁷ The two meanings, however, are by no means mutually exclusive; and the term does not have to be confusing provided one clearly adverts to the difficulty that it hides. We shall first consider Hegel's *general* analysis of reflection, and then proceed to distinguish three stages in its development.

A long passage in the *Logic* defines reflection explicitly (II, 13–14). It is a movement of becoming and transition which remains internal to itself ('*Die Bewegung des Werdens und Übergehen, das in sich selbst bleibt*'). It is a movement within which any distinction between term and term (*das Unterschiedene*) is immediately annulled ('*nur als das an sich Negative . . . bestimmt ist*'). The terms and the distinction that should separate them

from the rest of the movement are thus determined as a merely passing show of reality (*als Schein bestimmt ist*). In other words, since reflection is a movement that returns upon itself, the distinction within it between starting point and end is only an apparent one. Hegel also defines it as *'the movement of nothing to nothing and so back to itself'* (*die Bewegung von Nichts zu Nichts und dadurch zu sich selbst zurück*). And he explains that the *other* which comes to be as the result of this kind of becoming does not mean the end (*das Nichtsein*) of a previous *being*. Rather, since both the *being* which has been left behind and the *other* which is achieved have only apparent reality (i.e. they are both a *nothing*), the transition from the one to the other is just as much a return as it is a going forward. It is a movement which leaves *nothing* behind and achieves *nothing* new. The transition transforms itself (*hebt sich auf*) into its opposite (viz. a return) in its very process of transition. Now, Hegel's interest is to determine how reflection (as the result of the tension established between 'going-forward' and 'return') can issue an immediate being and at the same time transcend it.

Hegel claims that there is a sense in which the movement just described has indeed a positive content. Its being, however, is not a mere datum, but the result of the double negation (*die Negation eines Nichts*) in which reflection consists. Reflection is, first of all, a movement of disappearing, for there is no absolute starting point with which its being can be identified. But at the same time, since there equally is no absolute final point to which the movement is directed and with which its being can be identified, the movement of disappearing is checked in its very disappearing. The result is the disappearing of the first disappearing: the negation of a negation. Being appears precisely as the result of such a double negativity. It is defined by the persistence of the movement precisely qua movement: by its coincidence with itself (*Gleichheit mit sich*). Reflection *is*, therefore – but not *tout court*. Rather, it *is* because it *is not not-being*. And this way of expressing its being is more for Hegel than a more circuitous and clumsier way of simply reinstating being. The double negation expresses being precisely as the result of the inner tension of reflection rather than as a merely presupposed and inert fact (II, 14–15).

One can say, therefore, that reflection *is*. Since its being, however, is mediated by negativity, reflection is qua being already the opposite of being. Its being is forever on the verge of transforming itself (*aufheben*) into negativity. Contrariwise, reflection can equally be said *not to be*, for as a movement turned upon itself it has no absolute term with which it can be identified. But we have seen that by being so radicalized the negativity of reflection becomes self-related, and that it reintroduces being. The negativity of reflection, therefore, is implicitly being from the start. And just as the being of reflection is forever on the verge of

transforming itself into its *other*, so its negativity is equally in the opposite process of transforming itself into being (II, 14–15).

However, if such is its structure, reflection acquires two distinct meanings; and it acquires both (this is the all-important point) for precisely the same reason. Thus, *reflection is first of all show. By show we mean a reality which is itself only in virtue of a reference outside of itself.* It is being – but being on the verge of transforming itself into its *other*. It is being only as *moment*, or being affected by nothingness. It is equivalent to immediacy, therefore, for since its being is only a momentary one, it has no definite limits, and can be grasped only in some arbitrary 'here' and 'now'. And again, show is a nothingness – not a reality on its own, but only the *illusion* of being. It is nothing substantial. Yet, in thus being unsubstantial, it acquires a reality of its own. Its nature consists precisely in *not* being anything substantial. It is a nothingness which transforms itself, precisely as nothingness, into being. Show, in other words, is both being which transforms itself into its own negation, and nothing which transforms itself into being (II, 9, 11). *It has the same structure which defines reflection*, and which Hegel normally expresses with the pithy phrase '*die Negation der Negation*' (II, 13).

But reflection is also essence. Indeed, essence is nothing else but the reflection of an object back into itself. The movement presupposes a moment in which the object still lacks self-identity. At that moment the object is *not* – or it *is*, but only in a *qualified sense*. It is present only as an illusion, or in the same form which also defines at first show. The essence of the object is achieved precisely by overcoming such a moment of negativity: in the reassertion of its self-identity in spite of the first moment of non-identity. However, in its return back to itself the object must reach back to the first moment of negativity and include it within itself, or otherwise it would fail to establish itself as the *only* truth. It would simply fall at the side of the first moment as one object next to another (and the other object, presumably, would also have a reality of its own). Rather, in its return back to itself the object must prove itself as the *only* reality which was present from the start – even in the first moment of negativity. But of course, in thus reclaiming for itself even the first moment of negativity, the object qualifies both its own self-identity as expressed by essence, and the negativity as expressed in the first moment. Essence is identity only as the negation of an original negation – i.e. as the check imposed on the first moment of disappearing on the part of the object. By the same token, the first negation entails from the start, precisely qua negation, the identity of essence. In other words, essence entails the same transformation of nothingness into being and of positive self-identity into negativity which defines both reflection in general and show (II, 11).

The important lesson to be learned, therefore, from the analysis of

reflection is that essence and show, the inner and outer side of the object, are one and the same thing. 'Der Schein ist dasselbe, was die *Reflexion* ist . . . Das Wesen ist *Reflexion*' (II, 13). Reflection defines the structure of both; and in defining one of the them, it defines the other as well. However, it does not follow that there is no legitimate sense in which essence and show can be distinguished. After all, Hegel does not simply assert their identity. He asserts it in terms of a reflective movement; and the fact that he does so is just as significant as the assertion of the identity itself. We must remember that reflection is a self-becoming, or a becoming which achieves self-identity precisely inasmuch as it persists *as becoming*. In other words, if reflection persists indeed as a self-becoming, it persists only as an appearing (i.e. as *becoming*). Reflection exhibits, therefore, both a side of *mere appearance* and one of *persistence*. And even though the two sides are in mutual opposition, reflection exhibits each of them only in virtue of the other. *Reflection is thus opposed to itself, and yet self-identical*. 'So ist die *Reflexion* sie selbst und ihr Nicht-sein, und ist nur sie selbst, indem sie das Negative ihrer ist, denn nur so ist das Aufheben des Negativen zugleich als ein Zusammengehen mit sich' (II, 16). One can distinguish, therefore, between show and essence simply because there is indeed in reflection a distinction and mutual opposition between *itself* and *itself*; and one can derive the two concepts by expressly signifying one side of reflection while merely implying the other. On the other hand, one can still identify essence and show, since reflection is equally self-identical. In other words, show and essence are related to one another in the same way as reflection is related to itself. The development of their mutual relationship is one and the same as the development of the interplay between self-identity and yet inner difference in reflection. Essence does not signify, accordingly, the self-identity of some empty object in general (any more than reflection does), but *the persistence of show precisely as show*. It is indeed the opposite of show, but only because show is from the start the opposite of itself. And again, it is indeed identical with show, but only because it is from the start its own opposite. Contrariwise, show is not a mere delusion, but the showing of essence within itself. It too is the opposite of essence, but only because essence entails from the start a moment of self-repulsion. And again, it too is identical with essence, but only inasmuch as it too from the start is its own opposite.

Implicit in Hegel's analysis of reflection is, of course, a polemic against the dichotomy usually posited between the world of phenomena on the one hand, and thing-in-itself or essence of reality on the other (see II, 9–10). Hegel is arguing in favour of a strict identity between show and essence, phenomena and thing-in-itself, which allows none the less a meaningful distinction to be retained between the two terms. There is a sense, according to Hegel's analysis, in which one can still think of an

object as reflected within itself (viz. as thing-in-itself or as essence). Its reflection, however, is not to be interpreted as establishing a reality which lies beyond the sphere of outward phenomena; and beyond the grasp, therefore, of an intelligence intent upon the phenomena. Rather, reflection defines the structure of the phenomena qua phenomena. Essence, as we have just put it, is *the persistence of show precisely as show*. It is possible, therefore, to establish a world of phenomena, because the movement of reflection which makes such a world possible is present in the phenomena themselves. *Vice versa*, phenomena are indeed a disappearing reality devoid of substantiality. There is no need, however, to choose between the positive (but insubstantial) content which they offer and the negative (viz. empty) subsistence of the thing-in-itself, for their movement of disappearance is a moment essential to the reflection whereby an object first comes to be itself. One only needs to define, therefore, the identity of an object with itself in order to have allowed already for a sphere of phenomenality.

So far we have considered reflection in general. We must now delineate the three stages which Hegel recognizes in the general interplay between essence and show just defined. They are the stages of *positing reflection*, *external reflection* and *determining reflection*.

(b) *Positing reflection (die setzende Reflexion)*

Positing reflection defines the relationship between essence and show (inner reflection and immediate being) as the movement between two merely formal terms devoid of individual subsistence. The two terms have reality only as disappearing moments within the totality of the movement. Hegel's analysis, therefore, consists in a process whereby, starting first from one term and then the other as if in each case the term were *presupposed*, one concludes in point of fact by *positing* it as the result of the movement for which it had provided (supposedly) the assumed starting point.

Thus, Hegel argues that since reflection is a movement, it *presupposes* immediate being as the condition for its realization. Reflection must start; and it must presuppose, therefore, a starting point. However, the movement of reflection is such that on its being realized, it reverses its original intention; and thus qualifies the nature of its presupposed starting point. 'Diese Unmittelbarkeit, die nur *Rückkehr* des Negativen in sich ist, – ist jene Unmittelbarkeit, welche die Bestimmtheit des Scheins ausmacht, und von der vorhin die reflektierende Bewegung anzufangen schien' (II, 15). *Reflection is a movement that turns upon itself*. It cannot be said to have begun (viz. precisely as a *reflective* movement), unless it has already returned to its starting point (II, 15). This latter, therefore, far from being merely presupposed, must be the result of the movement for which it was supposed to provide a beginning. The realization of

reflection thus coincides with the reduction of the immediate being with which it began to a merely passing moment. Immediate being is nothing in itself, but only the result of a movement towards it. And reflection itself is a movement which *posits* (*setzt*) that which it *presupposes* (*voraussetzt*) (II, 15–16). It is a presupposing which transforms itself into a process of positing the presupposition.

The analysis of reflection, however, is still not complete, for the process just analysed can be shown to reverse itself once more. Reflection turns from its just revealed function of *positing* the presupposition with which it began back to a movement of presupposing. And this second inversion is only to be expected, for reflection could hardly be said to have successfully mediated (i.e. posited by way of its return to it) the being with which it began unless it reintroduces it (but now as the result of the movement) precisely as it was at the beginning – viz. as immediate being. In other words, short of reinstating its presupposition in its original immediate character, reflection might well be said to have left it behind or to have achieved something else *in its stead* – but not to have posited it precisely as it appeared at first. Reflection would not be a true return upon itself unless the immediacy of its starting point were reintroduced precisely as the result of the return (II, 16).

The new turn in the movement of reflection is actually already apparent in the statement of the first. For to the extent that the immediate being first exhibited by reflection is negated by it as something in itself, it is immediately reinstated precisely as the being *of* reflection – i.e. as containing from the start the return upon itself in which reflection consists. It was reflection from the start, and it is this truth that the first inversion realized. Immediate being could legitimately be taken, therefore (and so it was in fact), as the starting point of reflection. In other words, in positing its starting point, reflection simply returns to itself. In positing it, it simply presupposes itself.

It is important, however, to take seriously *all* the implications of the second inversion in the intention of reflection – as Hegel does indeed. Its effect is twofold. The first (which we have just seen) is to extend the reflectivity of the whole movement to embrace the first moment of immediate appearance. However, the extension of reflectivity to include immediacy would hardly make any difference to reflection itself unless it equally meant the extension of immediacy to include reflectivity: unless, in other words, the nature of reflection were radically qualified by embracing immediacy. It would certainly not be enlightening to say that reflection is a movement which in determining a given point as *its own* starting point only presupposes itself, if the claim only meant that reflection begins where immediacy has given place to reflectivity. The claim would amount to a trivial tautology – viz. reflection is reflection. To extend reflectivity to include immediacy would only mean to abstract from

immediacy whenever considering reflection. On the other hand, the claim becomes very significant if it is taken quite literally to mean that reflection *is* the immediacy of its starting point. Understood in this way, it ceases to be an empty tautology, for it defines reflection in terms of its opposite – viz. immediacy. Or more precisely, it further qualifies reflection in terms of the result which follows upon its nature as a movement which persists precisely *as movement*. *Reflection results in immediacy*. We already made this point in the previous section when we remarked that a movement in which advance and return coincide (and the one is mediated by the other) becomes *indifferent* to any distinction between starting point and end. One can start in it *anywhere*, and it would be futile trying to justify one point in preference over another. But it is precisely such indifference to distinctions that immediacy signifies. Immediate being is simply *there*; and it is whatever it happens to be. Reflection transforms itself into immediacy precisely because it is a movement which always remains with itself and mediates itself through itself. In remaining with itself reflection repels itself (*stieß sich von sich selbst ab*) and gives rise to its own opposite. In brief, in positing its own starting point reflection presupposes itself, and it can do so because in thus presupposing itself, it posits the immediacy from which a start (which is *only* a start and not quite reflection yet) can truly be made. 'Die Bewegung wendet sich als Fortgehen unmittelbar in ihr selbst um und ist nur so Selbstbewegung, – Bewegung, die aus sich kommt, insofern die setzende Reflexion voraussetzende, aber als voraussetzende Reflexion schlechthin setzende ist' (II, 16).

Once all the implications of the transformation of reflection from *positing* to *presupposing* are drawn out, a new light is also thrown on the meaning of the first inversion from *presupposing* to *positing*. The immediate being from which reflection begins is, qua immediate being, only a passing moment – for it is from the start already the result of reflectivity. Its transformation, therefore, from the status of a presupposition to something which *is* only in virtue of a reference outside of itself is the return of reflection back to itself. Indeed, the transformation *is* reflection itself, for we have seen (and we repeat again) that reflectivity consists in a movement which persists precisely as movement – in a mixture, that is, of being and non-being. The disappearing of the first immediate being (i.e. its mere 'showing') is one and the same as the reference backward and forward (and the one through the other) in which the reality of reflection formally consists. Of course, once reflection returns from immediacy back to itself, the stage is set for its collapse into immediacy once more. Thus, in presupposing immediacy, reflection presupposes itself; and in presupposing itself, it posits immediacy (from which it can start for its return back to itself).

The analysis can be summarized by means of the following paradigm:

Reflection:

- 1 Reflection presupposes immediate being
- 2 Reflection posits immediate being
- 3 Reflection presupposes immediate being
i.e. reflection posits immediate being precisely as presupposed

Immediate being:

- 1 Immediate being is not (viz. it is only a show)
- 2 Immediate being is
- 3 Immediate being is by *not* being (viz. it acquires subsistence precisely as a show)
i.e. the show of immediacy equals the movement of reflection within itself.

(c) External Reflection (die äußere Reflexion)

As carried out so far, the analysis of reflection has brought to light the identity of outward show and inner reflectivity – of immediate being and essence. It has presented the distinction between the two as a merely disappearing moment. The analysis, however, cannot stop at this point. If it did, Hegel would be ignoring the fact that immediate being and essence *at least appear* not to coincide. Even granted that it is wrong to conceive the two as extrinsic terms, the fact remains that they usually *are* so conceived. Indeed, positing reflection even depends in some sense on such an illusion, for it *does* start by presupposing the two notions as distinct, and then proceeds to exhibit the presence of each in the other. To be complete, therefore, Hegel must also show how it is at least *possible* for immediate being and essence to appear outside one another; and for reflection to become (as Hegel puts it) *external*, or a movement between terms which stand in a relation of mutual indifference. He must account, in other words, for the possibility of misconceptions about the true nature of the relationship. And he does so by showing that there is a perfectly legitimate sense (*but by no means an ultimate one*: here is where misconceptions occur) in which immediate being and essence remain indeed indifferent to one another.

The transition in the development of an object from the stage in which all its elements are held together in a unity of tension to the further stage in which they collapse in a relation of mutual indifference is a common one in the Hegelian dialectic. It occurs at every turn. It appears, moreover, that Hegel did not find the move a particularly troublesome one, for the passages in which he makes it are usually very terse, and hardly explain just *why* there should be a transition from formal unity (i.e. unity of tension) to what might be called a *material* indifference. Hegel seems to take it for granted. The case of the transition from positing to external reflection is no exception to the common rule. The passage in which it

occurs could not be more cryptic. The passage contains first of all a summary of the dialectic which has just preceded it ('So ist die Reflexion sie selbst und' etc.; II, 16). The statement of the transition to a new level of analysis begins only with 'Aber es ist zugleich bestimmt als *Negatives*'. And there is no denying that the text does not explicate just *why* immediacy, which is *in actual fact* identical with the movement whereby reflection always turns back to itself from *another* (i.e. it is identical with the movement of mediation in which reflection consists) should become at one point opposed to it. The result is, of course, that reflection becomes determined in opposition to immediacy. In another passage which immediately follows the one just referred to and which introduces in the *Logic* the section on external reflection, Hegel is equally cryptic ('Die Reflexion als absolute Reflexion ist' etc.; II, 17). The passage is more a definition of the difference between the general notion of reflection and external reflection than an explanation of why reflection should become external.

Yet, does Hegel really need to be more explicit? Or does not positing reflection establish all the conditions required for the transition to the external, so that once it has been fully developed he only needs to advert to the fact that the other is already present? The two objects into which reflection doubles itself when it becomes external correspond to the two moments which define it precisely as positing reflection. We remember that reflection is self-identical, and yet opposed to itself – and that it is both for the same reason. As Hegel reminds us in the passage just adverted to, reflection is itself and its non-being, and it is itself only because it is the negative of itself. 'So ist die Reflexion sie selbst und ihr Nichtsein, und ist nur sie selbst, indem sie das Negative ihrer ist, denn nur so ist das Aufheben des Negativen zugleich ein Zusammengehen mit sich' (II, 16). In other words, the movement of reflection coincides on the one hand with itself. It is then a simple self-reference: '*ein Zusammengehen mit sich*'. But on the other hand, reflection still remains a *movement*; and there is a sense, therefore, in which it always remains *other than itself*. It is then a mere show. Now, we have seen that for Hegel these two moments coincide in positing reflection. One can say, therefore, that each is *itself* (viz. only a moment) and yet the whole of reflection. Hence the instability of positing reflection. One cannot start from either of its two terms without being *ipso facto* involved in the process which results in the term from which one has just started. However, if such is the case, it becomes perfectly indifferent to the notion of reflection by which of its two moments it is defined, for to grant one of them is to have granted the whole of reflection already. Each moment, therefore, can well acquire the appearance of an independent object, since each is indeed from the start the whole of reflection. Hence the transition from positing to external reflection. The same reason that makes it impossible for positing

reflection to retain (except as a disappearing element) the distinction between its two moments equally accounts for their appearance as indifferent elements – for if each moment is already the other, each is the *whole*, and thus an object complete in itself.

It should be clear that Hegel does not explicitly argue in this way in his analysis of reflection. Yet, the argument is a fair one, first of all because it *does* explain the transition in question; but also because the same argument is explicitly put forward by Hegel in a parallel context of the *Logic*. Immediately after the analysis of reflection, he goes on to consider the categories of identity, difference, diversity, opposition and contradiction. They define the determinations that accrue to an object in virtue of its reflective structure. Identity and difference correspond to the two moments of self-relation and negativity which, as we have seen, make up reflection (II, 32). The total object under consideration consists, of course, in the interplay between the two. *Each moment is both itself and the whole, i.e. itself and the other*. 'Der Unterschied ist das Ganze und sein eigenes Moment, wie die Identität ebenso sehr ihr Ganzes und ihr Moment ist. – Dies ist als die wesentliche Natur der Reflexion' (II, 33). However, as soon as Hegel has characterized identity and difference in this way, he goes on to introduce a third category, viz. diversity, by which he means a situation in the object in which the two moments of identity and difference fall apart, and each becomes indifferent to the presence of the other (II, 34). And it is clear from the context that diversity corresponds in the previous analysis to the stage of external reflection. 'In der Verschiedenheit als der Gleichgültigkeit des Unterschieds ist sich überhaupt die *Reflexion äußerlich geworden*' (II, 34). But why does diversity follow upon the interplay between identity and difference? Why does indifference to difference (*die Gleichgültigkeit des Unterschieds*) issue from their unity of tension? No doubt because identity and difference, since each is already the whole object, can each assume the form of a complete, independent object. Whereas they were at first only *moments* in the object, they become, as Hegel puts it, reflected each into itself. 'Dies näher betrachtet, so sind beide, die Identität und der Unterschied . . . Reflexionen, jedes Einheit seiner selbst und seines Andern; jedes ist das Ganze. Damit aber ist die Bestimmtheit, *nur* Identität oder *nur* Unterschied zu sein, ein Aufgehobenes' (II, 34–5). The original object is both itself and the negation of itself – i.e. it is self-identical and yet entails a distinction between itself and itself. These two moments of identity and difference are held together at first by a unity of tension. But since each entails the other – since each, in other words, is the *whole* object – each assumes the form of an object complete in itself. The original object thus collapses into a diversity of indifferent objects – and it does so precisely in virtue of its original relationship to itself (II, 34).

Identity and difference do not enter, of course, into the transition from positing to external reflection. Yet, one can easily recognize in their transition to diversity the collapse of the two moments of positing reflection into a relation of mutual indifference. Reflection doubles itself into immediate being and negative reflectivity (II, 17). The difference, in other words, between phenomenality and reflectivity with which any analysis of reflection usually begins is reinterpreted by Hegel as a function of reflection itself. Reflection is not to be invoked simply as a means of bridging two already presupposed terms (viz. immediate being and negative identity). Rather, the externality between the two terms and their need for being bridged is first established by the formal structure of reflection itself – i.e. by the movement of which the two terms are only abstract moments. *But if the indifference of external reflection derives from the formality of positing reflection, one only needs to develop it precisely as external reflection in order to rediscover in it the unity of positing reflection.* This is the step which determining reflection will have to take.

(d) *Determining reflection (Die bestimmende Reflexion)*

External reflection *determines* the immediate being which it presupposes by introducing within it (but as a moment external to it) an element of reflectivity. 'Was drie äußerliche Reflexion an dem Unmittelbaren bestimmt und setzt, sind insofern demselben äußerliche Bestimmungen' (II, 17).

In the same way (one may suppose) one determines the being of phenomena by referring them to universal laws, and thus transforming them into instances of such laws.¹⁸ In a sense, the laws negate the being which they determine, for they posit it precisely as one of their instances. They deny, in other words, that it is the purely immediate being that it appears to be at first. In another sense, however, they establish it in a positive sense, for they define *what it is*. They bestow upon it a determinateness, in virtue of which alone the immediate being acquires a recognizable character.

At first, the process of determination appears to remain extrinsic to the terms that it mediates. It is clear, however, that its externality cannot last. One need only reflect on its result to recognize the logical priority that it has (qua reflective movement) over the terms that it mediates. Immediate being would not have a recognizable character at all unless it were from the start connected with essence. It is the immediacy of essence. The reflection of this latter is *immanent* to it. *Vice versa*, the reflection of essence would have no reality at all unless it issued in mediate being.

The text in which the *externality* of external reflection is overcome does not need detailed commentary, for the dialectic that it contains follows

the same general pattern as positing reflection (II, 18). External reflection begins by *presupposing* immediate being as an element foreign to itself. In actual fact, however, it turns out to *posit* it, for it is only through reflection that immediate being is first determined as what it is. It is negated as it appeared at first and expressed precisely as a function of reflection. But in thus negating immediate being, reflection equally negates its own negativity – i.e. its positing function ('Sie ist im Negieren das Negieren dieses ihres Negierens'). For if immediate being is truly a function of reflectivity, then reflection does not have to relate itself to it as if it were an extrinsic element. It does not have to abolish it as it first appears in order to replace it with its own reflectivity. Rather, immediate being is the *being* of reflection. Or *vice versa*, reflection is the immanent essence of immediacy. Reflection *posits* immediate being, in other words (or for that matter, *presupposes* it), in the same manner that it posits or presupposes itself: as something to be achieved through its own movement.

External reflection thus repeats the dialectic of positing reflection. *It does so, however, with a difference.* We must remember that external reflection follows upon positing reflection, and that it is its result. Its dialectic, therefore, cannot be expected to have quite the same meaning as that of positing reflection. It might *repeat* it, but not substitute for it. And the difference between the two is an obvious one. Positing reflection begins by momentarily granting the externality between immediate being and reflectivity, and then proceeds immediately to negate it. It grants the distinction between the two moments of reflection only as a disappearing factor, for its explicit intention is to manifest the unity of tension that obtains between the two. However, we have seen how the relativization of the distinction between the two moments has the further (but at first unexpected) effect of transforming them into independent objects. Positing reflection thus ends up justifying *in actual fact* (albeit not in intention) the appearance of externality between the moment with which it begins, and which it is its business to negate. Now, external reflection differs from positing reflection because the externality with which it begins has been developed and justified in the dialectic that has just proceeded it. External reflection starts from elements expressly determined as indifferent objects, and its first intention is to relate them together precisely as elements *extrinsic to one another*. It so happens, however, that in the course of carrying out its intention external reflection proves them to be once more only moments of the general movement of reflection. It reinstates, in other words, the intention of positing reflection. There is a sense, therefore, in which positing and external reflection simply repeat one another, for there is nothing in the dialectic of the former which is not also present in the latter. They are both expressions of the same general notion of reflection. On the other hand, they differ radically

inasmuch as each begins with an intention directly opposite to that of the other – but then each ends up justifying *in actual fact* the intention of the other. As one moves, therefore, from positing to external reflection, a genuine advance *does* take place, for each makes explicit the one side of reflection which the other merely implies. At the end of external reflection we are thus in a position of conceiving an object in which all the consequences of its reflective structure are *expressly signified*.

Determining reflection (*die bestimmende Reflexion*) defines such an object. Its appearance concludes Hegel's analysis of reflection, for it is the synthesis and the result of both positing and external reflection.¹⁹ It makes explicit all the aspects of the relationship that obtains between the object as a whole and its moments. The relationship can be readily summarized and made clear simply by saying that it is one between object and *essential determinations* (*die Wesenheiten*). Reflectivity and immediacy, in other words, reappear under the form of various determinations *essential to the total object*. Since the determinations are *essential*, they each express the total object. Each thus remains indifferent to the presence of the others; and they are all related together to the same object as to an empty receptacle (*ein Leeres*) which admits any of them as well as any other (II, 21–2). On the other hand, since each is still expressly *only* a determination, each remains distinct from the total object. Each is thus expressly the whole, and yet remains expressly distinct from it. As a result, each re-enacts within itself the dialectic between totality and moment defined by reflection. With determining reflection, therefore, reflection achieves a final explication. It achieves a body (so to speak), or an outward reality. In positing reflection the distinction between totality and moment (or between moment and moment) has only formal validity. The truth with which positing reflection is concerned is the *unity between the two* – be it only a unity of tension. In external reflection, on the other hand, such a unity is merely implied. The significant truth is the indifference of the two moments of reflection to one another, or the fact that reflection has two meanings, and that it is indifferent to either. In determining reflection, finally, the moments of reflection appear as independent objects. The formality of positing reflection is thus overcome. But at the same time, each object still reflects within itself (and explicitly so) the whole movement of reflection. The externality of external reflection, therefore, is equally overcome. What is achieved is a unity of tension reflected in a manifold of determinations.

IV

At the beginning of this essay we defined the critical problem of contradiction of Hegelian philosophy as one of determining how literally one

should understand a number of texts in which Hegel asserts contradiction to be essential to reality. Most critics have tried to soften the strength of such texts by reading 'opposition' in lieu of 'contradiction'. They have argued that Hegel's only aim was to show that the concepts upon which past philosophers had based their theories of reality were unsatisfactory; that they were, in point of fact, contradictory. He tried to replace them, therefore, with a new type of concepts (dialectical ones) which alone could be said to overcome contradiction.

At the end now of our long analysis of reflection, one point should clearly emerge. *Reality is for Hegel essentially contradictory because it is reflective*. It consists in a movement that turns upon itself; and cannot be said to have, therefore, any definite starting point or end except its own process of coming to be. The movement exhibits two sides. Since it negates any limit that would restrict it to some particular determination of being, it gives rise on the one hand to a mere show of reality – viz. to a pure movement of appearing and disappearing which always falls short of substantiality. But on the other hand, since the movement persists qua movement, it establishes itself relatively to its show of reality as a steady point of reference. It acquires self-identity and subsistence. Reflection exhibits one side through the same movement whereby it exhibits the other. It can appear, therefore, under three general forms: either as a movement that begins by presupposing one of the two sides, but then immediately reverts its intention and ends up positing the presupposed side; or as an extrinsic relation holding together (but only accidentally) the two sides; or as a concrete object exhibiting both sides as its *essential* determinations. In all cases, however, the crucial factor is the contradiction incurred by both sides. The side of outward show is contradictory because it acquires reality only to the extent that it is nothing in itself. Its truth lies, in other words, precisely in the moment of self-identity, the presence of which should reduce it to a mere nothingness. The side of self-identity is equally contradictory, for to the extent that identity asserts itself in opposition to show, it becomes an empty abstraction which is just as indefinite as the flux of show. In achieving itself, it only reverts to its opposite. Reflection consists in the movement whereby contradiction reveals itself in one determination and thus causes its destruction; but in so doing, only manages to reassert itself in another. The three stages that Hegel distinguishes in reflection represent the three basic forms under which this movement takes place. The first makes explicit the unity of tension to which it gives rise; the second, the moment of externality; and the third, the unity which is preserved even in the moment of externality. Together, they provide the paradigm for the identity in difference, and the difference in identity that defines for Hegel the Absolute.

We have already mentioned that the *Wesenheiten* are identity, differ-

ence, diversity, opposition and contradiction. We do not have to study them in detail here, for they all express, under the form of an essential determination, the movement of reflection. They differ only because each serves to make explicit a different result of that movement. We are already familiar with identity and difference. We have used them to introduce the notion of reflection. Identity expresses the return of reflection upon itself; difference its outward showing. We are also familiar with diversity. It expresses the moment in the dialectic of reflection in which the formal unity between inner reflection and outer showing results in externality. Opposition signifies, on the other hand, the return of the logical object out of its externality back to a unity of tension (II, 40). The new unity thus achieved is explicitly signified by contradiction (II, 49). It is contradiction that summarizes for Hegel and makes explicit the whole dialectic of reflection.

Contradiction, therefore, is not for Hegel a conceptual failure, but the inner structure of any concrete object. 'Es ist überhaupt aus der Betrachtung der Natur des Widerspruchs hervorgegangen, daß es für sich noch, sozusagen, kein Schaden, Mangel oder Fehler einer Sache ist, wenn an ihr ein Widerspruch aufgezeigt werden kann' (II, 61; cf. 61–2). In a sense it *should not be*, for it creates such a tension within an object that the need arises for the object to supersede its given form and replace it with another. And yet contradiction inevitably *is*, for no matter which form an object assumes at a given stage of its development, it incurs contradiction. Hence the form must be transcended in favour of another – but only to incur contradiction once more, and to be transcended in yet another form. Thus, identity and difference achieve a unity of tension precisely because *both* incur contradiction – and one cannot stop at one of the two concepts any more than one can at the other. Hegel, in other words, relies on contradiction to set reality in flux, and to develop the idea of a unity of tension. The claim, therefore, as some critics would have it, that Hegel's dialectic achieves in the Absolute some sort of superunity in which all contradictions are finally resolved would only serve to deprive the Absolute of the spring that makes its movement possible. The Hegelian dialectic (and this is the upshot of the present essay) provides indeed *a new form of conceptual unity, but only in the sense that it provides the rule whereby to follow contradiction as it annuls and yet reasserts itself, and in so doing yields the content of an object.*

It does not follow, on the other hand (as some other critics have objected) that Hegel has removed all limits from thought; and that on the strength of his claim one can no longer distinguish between truth and falsity. For Hegel contradiction is a situation which *should not be*. His full claim, however, is that even though it should not be, *it is none the less.*

Accordingly, whenever a determination of reality proves to be self-

contradictory (as any determination inevitably does on close analysis), one should immediately proceed to redefine it in order to resolve its contradictions. To avoid contradiction, in other words, still is a basic rule in Hegel's canon of thought. However, what Hegel will not countenance is the possibility of ever achieving a concept in which contradiction is eschewed *tout court*. Although resolved at one level of reality, it simply reasserts itself at another. In this sense, contradiction is indeed the moving force of reality. In the *Logic* Hegel defines in the most abstract terms possible the outline of the movement whereby contradiction resolves itself, and yet, in so doing, only reasserts itself once more. The stages of the movement provide the content of the logical idea of the Absolute.

Notes

1 *Über die dialektische Methode*. 2nd edn, Bad Sachsa 1910. 1st edn, 1868. 37ff.

2 The second study of Grégoire's *Etudes hégéliennes* is dedicated to this problem. *Etudes hégéliennes. Les Points Capitaux du Système*. Paris et Louvain 1958. 51–102. We refer to this work for the Hegelian texts relevant to the present context.

3 For instance T. L. Haering: *Hegel. Sein Wollen und sein Werk*. Bd 2. 620, 666–70. J. McTaggart: *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*. Cambridge 1896. 9: G. R. G. Mure: *A Study of Hegel's Logic*. Oxford 1959. 102–5. Grégoire's opinion is that although one must recognize, according to Hegel, the presence of contradiction in reality, the contradiction is there only in the process of being resolved: 'Il ne pourrait s'agir de contradictions logiques dans les choses que dans le cas des antinomies logiques elles-même dont vient à l'instant d'être fait mention. Ces antinomies, ces oppositions dialectiques précédant l'*Aufhebung*, ne seraient donc pas, comme nous inclinons à le croire, des contradictions logiques que la réalité réussit à éviter, mais des contradictions logiques réelles mais provisoires que la réalité réussit à résoudre' (98).

4 By *Logic* we mean the *Wissenschaft der Logik* of 1812–16. This work will be quoted in the edition of Georg Lasson (2nd edn, Leipzig 1934); and will be referred to in parenthesis in the body of the article by volume number (Roman numerals) and page number (Arabic numerals).

5 We have introduced the term 'substantial' because Hegel explicitly remarks that with *Erwas* a beginning is made in a line of objective configurations of which subject (and, *a fortiori*, substance) will be a more developed instance. The term, therefore, can be fairly used to shed some light on what Hegel is saying at the moment. Cf. *Logik* I, 102.

6 The step whereby the lack of determined content in an object is turned into determination is what determines it precisely as a universal object in opposition to be found in the dialectic of being. As it is intended at first, pure being is a concept devoid of all content: it has no determination whatsoever. Yet, such a lack of a determining factor is quite common in the *Logic*. The first instance of it to determinate being. It too, therefore, acquires a 'determination' of its own. *Logik* I, 66.

7 For a brief and concrete discussion of the structure of self-consciousness, see *PhG.* 133–4. By *PhG* we shall be referring to the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister. 6th edn, Hamburg 1952.

8 *PhG.* 135.

9 We are rendering with 'indifference' a situation in the object usually referred to by Hegel with *Gleichgültigkeit* (in Miller's translation 'equivalence': *Hegel's Science of Logic*. London 1969. 375; in Johnston and Struther's translation, also 'equivalence': *Hegel's Science of Logic*. London 1929. vol. I. 394) and also *Indifferenz*. (Cf. *Logik* I, 387, at the bottom of the page, in which *Indifferenz* is explicitly used in lieu of *Gleichgültigkeit*.)

10 The term is already to be found (but only incidentally, as part of the definition of *Erscheinung*) in the *Phenomenology*: 'Denn Schein nennen wir das *Sein*, das unmittelbar an ihm selbst ein *Nichtsein* ist' (*PhG.* 110). It is being in the determination of a 'disappearing' (*ein Verschwinden*); or such that its truth lies outside of itself (*PhG.* 110–11).

11 Such a show is the phenomenon upon which scepticism fastens itself. It is also comparable, according to Hegel, to the *Erscheinung* of Kant's idealism. *Logik* II, 9–10.

12 See *Logik* I, 100–396; II, 164–5; I, 99–100; II, 168–9.

13 *PhG.* 92.

14 *ibid.*

15 *PhG.* 99.

16 'Das Sein ist das Unmitteilbare' (*Logik* II, 3). *Being* is also equated with show: 'Das Sein ist Schein' (*Logik* II, 9).

17 For instance, Hegel claims that 'das Wesen vielmehr den Schein in sich selbst enthält als die unendliche Bewegung in sich, welche seine Unmittelbarkeit als die Negativität, und seine Negativität als die Unmittelbarkeit bestimmt und so das Scheinen seiner in sich selbst ist. Das Wesen in dieser seiner Selbstbewegung ist die *Reflexion*' (*Logik* II, 13). In this text Hegel is using *Reflexion* to mean the whole movement of the logical object with its two sides of essence and show. But then he adds after a few lines: 'für den in sich gegangenen, hiemit seiner Unmittelbarkeit entfremdeten Schein haben wir das Wort der fremden Sprache, die *Reflexion*' (*Logik* II, 13). Here reflection is distinguished from show. It is show *apart* from its immediacy – i.e. abstract reflection.

18 That Hegel has in mind 'das Allgemeine (die Regel, das Prinzip, das Gesetz)' is clear from the *Anmerkung* following the section on external reflection: *Logik* II, 18ff. However, his remarks are of a more general nature. They determine the general notion of reflection which is implicit in all such more particular notions as universal, law etc. *Logik* II, 19.

19 The whole dialectic of determining reflection and its result are clearly summarized in the third paragraph of the section on 'Bestimmende Reflexion', *Logik* II. 22–3.

Hegel's metaphysics and the problem of contradiction

Robert B. Pippin

Hegel's contributions to social and political philosophy and to the philosophy of history, his lectures on the history of philosophy, and his comprehensive analysis of the details of human history are all fairly well known and often discussed. Many of his most original and provocative claims in these areas are found in his remarkable *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a work that has benefited from numerous, detailed commentaries. Much less noticed, especially in the twentieth century,¹ is that other of Hegel's only two real books, his *Science of Logic*.² This neglect is all the more remarkable since Hegel himself regularly claimed that the foundation for all other parts of his system were to be found only in the *Logic*, that its 'metaphysical' arguments alone could establish finally much of what he wanted to say elsewhere.³

However, as even Hegelians sometimes complain, such neglect may be benign, given that work's often impenetrable terminology and the fact that much of Hegel's case in the *Logic* owes its peculiar form of expression to his comrades in German idealism, Fichte and Schelling. Further, at times the *Logic*, like the *Phenomenology* (if one takes one's impressions from the commentaries), reads like an arcane *roman à clef*, requiring that subtle allusions to Greek metaphysics and nineteenth-century science and mathematics be revealed and discussed in detail if the work is ever to be understood. Indeed, even more problems await anyone interested in interpreting any one section, or idea, or topic. Such a topic would seem incapable of receiving a fair hearing on its own, given the constant Hegelian insistence on seeing any 'part' *only* in terms of the 'whole'. If we are to accept Hegel's claim that, in logic as in everything else, 'das Wahre ist das Ganze', no modest commentary on a single issue could hope to do justice to his intentions. Detailed connections with other, previous and subsequent 'moments' in the movement of the whole must apparently be established, requiring a commentary at least as long

as the *Logic* itself. Or, if one wants to do strict justice to Hegel's thought on some particular issue without such unextended analysis, one seems condemned, judging by many examples, to an opaque, brief, reshuffling of his own terms.

These problems, of course, reflect large, very difficult problems at stake in all Hegel interpretation, and they certainly cannot be resolved here. However, I think some progress can be made in interpreting Hegel's 'metaphysics' on a particular point if some, albeit minimal, attention is paid to the structure and intention of the work as a whole, and if the problem Hegel is addressing is discussed, at least to an extent fair to his case, in less systematically specific language.

Indeed, there is one metaphysical issue in particular most in need of such isolated attention – Hegel's doctrine of contradiction. Hegel is well known, but often little understood, for claiming that any determinate thing's 'identity' can be understood only as 'contradictory', apparently meaning that some way must be found for intelligibly saying of anything that it both 'is' and 'is not' what it is. In his more Schellingean moments Hegel formulates this doctrine by insisting that 'identity' can be understood only as an 'identity of identity and non-identity'. His more familiar term of art for this 'negation of negation', this logical doctrine that one can both posit and negate at the same time, is *Aufhebung* or 'sublation'. At bottom, though, this core of the Hegelian enterprise is defensible only if Hegel has made some case somewhere for the logical intelligibility of the 'contradiction' involved in such a sublation. For Hegel, this contradiction emerges in 'reflection' on 'essence', and it is that case in particular that I want to explore briefly below.

I

I raise this issue not only since Hegel's remarks about the 'dialectical' account required for 'essence' are at the very centre of his whole enterprise, but also because those claims can be, and have been, easily misinterpreted. Although it is true that *every* 'transition' in the *Logic* ultimately depends on Hegel's infamously complicated doctrine of 'contradiction', or, less flamboyantly, on his doctrine of 'determinate negation', there is one section in the *Logic* where Hegel explicitly discusses and defends his interpretation of 'contradiction' – in the context of Book 2's whole discussion of 'essence'. And there he makes some very surprising claims about that doctrine:

But it is one of the fundamental prejudices of logic as hitherto understood and of ordinary thinking, that contradiction is not so characteristically essential and immanent a determination as identity; but in fact . . .

contradiction [is] the profounder determination and more characteristic of essence . . . contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only insofar as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity.⁴

And, in even broader strokes, and with even stranger sounding consequences:

Only when the manifold terms have been driven to the point of contradiction do they become active and lively towards one another, receiving in contradiction the negativity which is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and spontaneous activity.⁵

Finally, Hegel concludes:

In general, our consideration of the nature of contradiction has shown that it is not, so to speak, a blemish, an imperfection or a defect in something if a contradiction can be pointed out in it. On the contrary, every determination, every concrete thing, every notion, is essentially a unity of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which, by virtue of the determinate, essential difference, pass over into contradictory moments.⁶

To speak of a contradiction 'in' a concrete thing is problematic enough, but to assert further that this contradiction is the 'indwelling pulsation of self-movement and spontaneous activity' requires, to say the least, no little explanation. Again, though, such an explanation is indispensable if many of Hegel's well-known, and often more widely accepted, claims are to be defended. When he asserts, for example, that the 'Absolute' both 'is' and 'is not' its appearances or shapes in history, he is making a claim that can be finally defended only by this 'dialectical' account of the relation between 'essence' and its appearances, or its 'negations', which it, as essence, is *not*. However, again, Hegel's wholehearted embrace of 'contradiction' seems very hard to take. Russell, in a famous swipe at the whole notion, writes impatiently that 'this [Hegel's doctrine of contradiction] is an example of how, for want of care at the start, vast and imposing systems of philosophy are built upon stupid and trivial confusions, which, but for the almost incredible fact that they are unintentional, one would be tempted to characterize as puns'.⁷ The 'stupid and trivial confusion' Russell alludes to is Hegel's supposed howler about the 'is of predication' and the 'is of identity', and it is a point to which we shall return shortly. First, some general remarks on Hegel's account of essence, the context for discussion of contradiction, are in order.

II

The explicit discussion of contradiction occurs in the second book of the *Logic*, entitled simply 'Essence' (*Wesen*). This section is preceded by an account of 'being' (*Sein*) and is followed by the 'subjective logic', or the 'notion' (*Begriff*). In the first section of this book on essence 'contradiction' emerges as an 'essentiality or determination of reflection', a 'reflection' that Hegel has argued is necessary in order to distinguish 'essential' from 'unessential'. His final claim about contradiction in this section is that any account of 'what a thing essentially is', any attempt to determine not its mere 'being' but at a 'reflected' level its essence, must be committed to this 'dialectical' contradiction. However, although such a claim sounds quite odd, not to say impossible, we should begin by noting that Hegel regards it as a consequence of his examination of some very traditional accounts of essence.

In fact, if we begin with certain basic aspects of the problem, we can detect two central traditional concerns throughout the first two books of the *Logic*. The first stems from considering the general problem of *change*, probably Hegel's central metaphysical interest. Some accounts of essence hold that there are some features of a thing which cannot change without that thing's ceasing to be what it is, and that there are other, manifold changes which do not affect such an identity (although, of course, such a substantial change could occur, and the thing literally could 'become' something else). Hegel will initially accept this minimal, 'substrate' requirement for essence, and indeed will present his own argument in favour of it in the transition from Book 1 to Book 2, as we shall see. To be sure, he develops his own version of 'what it is' about a thing that makes it what it is throughout alteration, but the first point to be noticed here is that his doctrine arises directly from an interest in a traditional aspect of the problem – the 'essence–accident' distinction. This is clear from his first definition of essence (*Wesen*) in Book 2 when he claims that 'essence is past – but timelessly past – being'.⁸ Here he directly plays off the Aristotelian phrase for essence, *to ti ēn einai*, the 'what it was to be' of a thing, and he even congratulates the German language for correctly preserving this temporal aspect by using a form of the past participle of the verb 'to be' (*gewesen*) for essence. Essence must be explained as somehow outside the flux of accidentally acquired properties gained or lost *in time*. It is 'timelessly past' or what a thing that changes *is*.

The second aspect of the traditional problem of essence arises out of the first. Besides a supposed need for essences to explain stability through change, a related aspect of this issue, the relation between 'essence and appearance', must also be explained. At this point, though, the problem is hard to state precisely since the philosophical vocabulary of the past

two thousand years uses a variety of words, often in different senses, to make this point. Substance, attribute, essence, appearance, illusion, and other such terms are often no more uniformly used in Hegel than in the tradition to which he addresses himself. In general, though, there is a continuity of interest in the modern search for 'substance', for that which exists independently, or by itself. (Even in Aristotle, a substance is not attributed of, nor does it exist in, a subject; it is what the subject is, just so that it may have properties.) This substance inquiry is for that which 'really' is, or is 'most of all'. To use Aristotle's terminology, telling us the 'what it was to be' of a substance is telling us its essence, what is true of the substance *per se*. And, in modernity as well as in Aristotle, this inquiry is after real, independent, determinate being, as opposed to merely accidental derivative, or especially 'apparent' being. It is this last designation that sets off the modern search for substance. From Descartes on, the question, What is essential in phenomenal change? came to mean, What is true of the world of appearances independently of the way that world happens to appear to me? In other words, the problem of contingency, or 'non-essentiality', became a *subjective* problem. Locke's *je ne sais quoi*, Leibniz's inquiry into the well-foundedness of the merely phenomenal world, Hume's refusal to admit any substance and Kant's *Ding an sich* – all indicate for Hegel the uniquely modern aspect of the problem of essence.

Thus, as in many such issues, Hegel takes himself to be solving in the *Logic* both the 'ancient' and the 'modern' versions of the problem of essence. He wants both to explain stability and identifiable determinacy through time and to show that the modern, epistemological question of 'reality' can be solved without committing us to dogmatic appeals about the power of pure reason alone (as in rationalism), to an unknowable essence (Locke), or to ungrounded (Hume) or merely subjectively grounded (Kant) phenomena. His main thesis in all of this, after he has distinguished essential from merely illusory being (*Schein*) as in scepticism, is to prove that 'illusory being, however, is *essence's own positing*',⁹ and he calls this yet to be explained 'showing of illusory being within essence itself' '*Reflection*'.¹⁰ If Hegel's discussion of essence, then, is to be a valuable contribution, what he must show is that there is no essence for a thing as an unchanging, stable, eternal 'form', *and* that there is no essence 'behind' or beyond the phenomena, *but* that this claim does not mean that we are thus committed to Heraclitean flux or to the ungrounded *Schein* of scepticism and phenomenalism. This 'contradiction' – that, even though there is a difference between essence and the non-essential, or mere appearances, there is also an 'identity' between them – is what most needs explaining in Hegel's account of contradiction itself.

And, it is quite important to keep in mind that it is this problem of 'essence' that makes such an account of 'contradiction' necessary. Hegel

does not claim that everything we say is contradictory and thus, in a straightforward sense of the term, meaningless. As we shall see, it is only in the metaphysical context surrounding any attempt to say just *what* something is that this problem arises. It is always worth remembering here that Hegel's whole metaphysical enterprise in the *Logic* begins with an unmistakably Aristotelian insistence on determinacy as a defining mark of any being. As with Aristotle, his attempt throughout is to specify those categories indispensably involved in the definition of 'anything at all', and it is the attempt to give this *Kategorienlehre* that will lead to contradiction.

As I said, though, Hegel agrees with the modern (post-Cartesian) attempt to know this essence independently of 'subjective' seemings and thus requires that this essence be 'reflected' as that which 'really' is. But it is this twin 'metaphysical' interest in essence that sets the stage for the doctrine of contradiction and all the claims made for it.

We can take one final step in setting this stage by noting how Hegel thinks his own problem of essence arises. This occurs in an interesting passage called 'The becoming of essence'.¹¹ Without looking at this section in detail, its consequences are clear. Hegel agrees with the initial modern claim in science and philosophy that the appearances, the given, cannot be explained on their own terms. An explanation by 'pure reason' of *why* the phenomena are related or relatable in certain basic ways is as important as telling precisely and predictably *what* those relations are. However, if we try to revert to an account based on what Russell called 'internal relations' and claim that Y happens to X because it is in the 'nature' of X for Y to happen to it, the problem becomes clear. Hegel calls it, in this section, the 'indifference' of the substrate to its determinations. This charge of indifference is simply Hegel's way of claiming that such an internal explanation is really no explanation at all; it merely repeats that Y happened to X with no account of why. However, he is not willing to abandon all such attempts to show a relation between substrate and appearances because of such apparent indifference and opt for exclusively external relations, or opt for no metaphysics in the classical sense at all. Instead, he argues for pressing on to find the correct terms for the relationship between objective ground and subjective appearance. As he puts it,

This unity [the unity of some phenomenal moment; for example, all these determinations happen to this *one* thing, or this, specifically, is the cause of that] thus posited as the totality of the process of determining in which it is itself determined as indifference, is a contradiction in every respect; it therefore has to be *posited* as subsuming this its contradictory character and acquiring the character of a self-determined, self-subsistent being which has for its result and truth, not the

unity which is merely indifferent, but the immanently negative and absolute unity which is called essence.¹²

To sum up, what Hegel claims to have shown, prior to the explicit discussion of essence in Book 2, is just why the modern essence–appearance distinction is required. Once the subjective, or reflective, turn is made and the appearances are, rightly, seen as always appearances to an observer, or as ‘subjectively mediated’, the ground, or substrate or source, of that mediation must be explained. Or, the Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian inability to consider the role of the subject in fixing the difference between essential and accidental properties left that tradition wide open to the sceptical attack of the ‘new way of ideas’. The distinction between essence and accident thus seemed arbitrary or ‘subjective’, and the question of essence became explicitly epistemological or reflective; namely, what could be established with certainty about the world, behind, or beyond, or posited as independent of subjective appearances. However, at this point such a reflective, second-level determination of essence can show no determinate connection between such essence and the world of experience around us. That relation is left indifferent (most dramatically, according to Hegel, in Spinoza, for whom the relation between substance and its determinations, or modes, is left indifferent, or inexplicable).¹³ The same point is obvious in Descartes’s attempts to make some transition between the *ordo cognoscendi* and the *ordo essendi*. It no more follows from the fact that I *know* myself clearly and distinctly as a *res cogitans* that I must *be* a mind distinct from a body than it follows from the fact that I *know* the world clearly and distinctly as merely ‘extended’ that it *is* only *res extensa*. But with such indifference scepticism about such a source reigns supreme and we are left with mere *Schein*, or illusory being, ungrounded, without objective foundation.

We are thus left with unacceptable alternatives. We supposedly have come to realize the indispensability of inquiring after a substrate for changing appearances and to realize the need to specify the essence of that substrate, but we cannot explain how the mind could know such a substrate or such differentia apart from the way the world contingently and thus non-essentially happens to appear. We seem to be able to retain this line of inquiry only by becoming what Kant would call ‘dogmatists’. On the other hand, when we confront this problem directly and turn our attention *first* to what the mind can know, we find that it can know only its own ideas, or that any access to an ‘exterior’ ground seems prohibited. To continue this doubt is to become a sceptic.¹⁴ To avoid both alternatives, Hegel must show that it does make sense to investigate the ‘essence’ of appearances but that the relation between such a source and its results is neither unknowable, indifferent, nor merely external. In his own words, ‘The process of determining and being determined is not a transition nor

an alteration, nor an emergence of determinations in the indifference, but is its own self-relating, which is the negativity of itself, of its merely implicit being.¹⁵

III

Any full account of this 'self-relating, which is the negating of itself' must take into account the philosophers who were, for Hegel, the most important philosophers of 'reflection', especially Kant and Fichte. In lieu of such a larger analysis, however, this general sketch of Hegel's interest in the problem of essence should provide a sufficiently detailed context in which to discuss his 'solution' to the problem of essence. Having, at this point in the *Logic*, determinately passed through ancient, early modern and transcendental attempts, Hegel now considers that the solution lies ready at hand, staring us in the face if we will only see it. At first glance, it does seem as if this solution is simple, indeed almost simplistic. He argues that the 'essence' of illusory being is, properly understood, the moments of *Schien* itself, that there is no essence behind the phenomena, but that essence is the 'recollection' (*Erinnerung*) of the process of phenomenal change itself (where 'phenomenal' is meant in its Kantian sense, or as subjectively conditioned appearances).¹⁶ At bottom Hegel is here, in his own way, agreeing with Kant that the objectivity of phenomena can be established (that, basically, the distinction between real and illusory can be transcendently established) *without* a dogmatic appeal to an unperceivable *jenseits*, or *Ding an sich*; but he now wants to deny Kant's sceptical remainder – the postulation of the existence of such an unnecessary entity. More straightforwardly, Hegel is asking empirical scepticism to take its own conclusions seriously.¹⁷ It is true that the notion of an independent, *an-sich* substance is unthinkable, unknowable, even inconsistent, and finally unnecessary, since the basic structure and coherency of objective experience can be established without such a commitment. (This is precisely Kant's discovery in the Transcendental Deduction.) Given that, continued allegiance to such a notion occurs only because of Kant's unreasonable 'reverence' for an unnecessary and outmoded conception of object.

Hegel realizes, of course, that such a claim for the 'identity and difference' of essence and appearance commits him to an unusual 'logic'. In his own terms he claims that what determining reflection will establish, or what is arrived at as the basic 'framework' or structure of experience (as in Kant's *Kategorienlehre*), 'constitute determinate illusory being as it is in essence, essential illusory being. Because of this determining reflection is reflection that has come forth from itself; the equality of essence with itself has perished in the negation, which is the dominant

factor.¹⁸ This last obscure phrase (from 'the equality of essence' on) is the beginning of a larger claim that experience has been determinately grounded (by a detailed category analysis, as in the *Logic*), but not 'indifferently'. Or, as in the next section of the *Logic*, there is an 'identity-in-difference' between appearance and essence, between what Hegel calls 'positedness' or 'negation' (the appearances, called negation because no one of the moments of such phenomenal change is what the whole is) and its 'essence'. He has an unusual, spatial way of putting the point: 'It is positedness, negation, which however bends back into itself the relation to other, and negation which is equal to itself, the unity of itself and its other, and only through this is an essentiality.'¹⁹

To understand this claim for the self-related, internal essentiality of *Schein*, we need to consider the large issue at stake for Hegel here and, as promised earlier, in the rest of his system. A reflective account of the 'phenomena' cannot, as we have seen, merely describe what appears, or repeat the successive moments of what Hegel calls *Schein*. Although such a descriptive methodology (or 'phenomenology' in the contemporary sense) is sometimes ascribed to Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is clearly excluded as adequate precisely by the whole argument for 'essence' (as well as by the presence of the interpreting *wir* in that book). On the other hand, though, Hegel's analysis and detailed *interpretation* cannot just *assume* a standpoint from which the 'essence' of that progression is dogmatically made manifest. So, again, this claim for the logical relation between essence and appearance must be taken into account as the most thorough attempt at an answer to the much-discussed interpretative question concerning the *Phenomenology*.

Also, in Hegel's philosophy of history the claim that there is 'reason' in history means not that there is some external Providence directing historical action but that the process of historical events itself is rational, or is its own rationality. In the same way, Hegel's claim that in political philosophy 'the real is the rational' would not be a reactionary or uncritical allegiance to 'what happens', since there is a distinguishable, rational essence to the actual; but neither would reflection on that essence be an empty moralizing about some idle 'ought', since that essence is determinate only in political actuality.

All of this, of course, raises numerous questions, many of which Hegel hardly had adequate answers for. It especially raises the problem of knowing in any detail how a correct description of some set of events can be defended as *correct*, if not empirically, rationally or transcendently. The more immediate problem for the moment, though, is whether the *very form* of the claim itself makes any sense. One might be tempted to say that such a claim that 'essence' is and is not identical with its appearances is simply a contradiction. True to form, Hegel not only accepts such a characterization, but heartily embraces it.

IV

Ultimately, his full defence for such a claim is presented throughout the course of the rest of the *Logic*; indeed, the analysis of negation and contradiction is the primary theme of the whole work. But we can make some progress in analysing the notion by looking at these initial claims.

For we have now arrived at a position where our general attempt to say 'what anything is' appears to Hegel fully 'contradictory', although in a very special sense. We already know: (a) that any attempt to specify the ground of appearances independently of an actual consideration of the phenomenal world itself is impossible (we end up with the 'indifference' problem of rationalism); and (b) that the attempt by scepticism to eliminate any 'ground' inconsistently leaves unexplained precisely what it needs to assume – the determinacy of the given. This means that any attempt to explain such a ground or essence must make determinate use of 'what appears' in different contexts, even while admitting that any of these appearances is *not* that essence. In Hegel's infamous language, this means that anything 'is what it is' and 'is what it is not', or 'everything is inherently contradictory'.

This claim amounts to one of the most important, even if most obscure, things said in the *Logic*. To see it more clearly, we shall have to retreat somewhat for a moment from the details of this section of the *Logic* and examine the basic 'logical' claim Hegel is making here concerning all discourse on 'essence'. Having done so, we can return to the general form of his argument. At bottom the simplest way to deal with this thesis about 'contradiction' is to examine its relevance to some issues in standard, subject-predicate logic.²⁰

Read straightforwardly, Hegel seems to be claiming that any attempt to say what a thing is – using, for the following example of his principle, some universal in the predicate position of a subject-predicate judgment – involves a dialectical, even contradictory, logic. Again *prima facie*, this must mean that saying

- (i) s is P

must also mean

- (ii) s is not P ,

thus generating a 'contradiction'.

Item (ii) appears to be true because P is a universal and, in this example, s a particular. s as s 'is not' completely P , just so that P can be attributed to particulars other than s . Thus

(i') Socrates is male

and

(ii') Socrates is not male,

since Plato, Alcibiades and others are also male but are not Socrates. In language used earlier, any attempt to specify the essence of a thing makes use of determinations that 'are not' what that particular *is* just so that we can, here, say something informative about Socrates. If that were not the case, 'essential' statements would be tautologous and 'empty', leaving us claiming only some version of

(iii) Socrates is Socrates.

At this point, however, Hegel's analysis seems not only confused but just wrong in an embarrassing way. Has he not obviously confused here, as Russell complained, the 'is' of predication with the 'is' of identity, a distinction he should be well aware of if he has read Plato, especially the *Sophist*, as carefully as is sometimes claimed? Why should the result of Hegel's analysis not be to show just that some individual (*s*) is not *identical* with some universal property (*P*), even while that property can be truthfully predicated of that individual (as in (i'))? No 'contradiction' results as long as it is clear that we are expressing *only* this denial of identity in (ii) and are not, as we appear to do when (i) and (ii) are left unanalysed, simultaneously predicating *P* of *s* and then denying that predication. There is thus no contradiction in admitting (ii) as long as we realize that the 'is' negated is not meant to be taken in the same way as

(iv) Socrates is not beautiful

or

(v) Socrates is not tall.

The problem with such criticisms, however, is that, far from having overlooked this issue, Hegel considers it as the heart of what he is interested in claiming. His whole point is that the 'is' in question for an *essential* determination must always be the 'is' of identity, and in that sense the contradiction does arise in just the way described. That is, in investigating some essence, Hegel insists that we can never be satisfied with simply predicating a universal of some particular (or of another universal for that matter, as in generic essences). As he has argued

throughout, we are interested not in what properties *s* happens to have but in just what *s* is so that *it* can have properties. Thus the term in the predicate position will not say what *s* (*and nothing else*) essentially is, *unless* it expresses some identity between subject and predicate. But, again, if it expressed this identity merely tautologically, or non-dialectically, or with no 'difference' and just 'identity', we would end up with some version of the uninformative (iii).

We need to be a little clearer here about why Hegel will not allow that essence judgments can be predicative. His central reason for that denial is that predicative or 'Fa' paradigms for all, even essential, description commits us to a metaphysical position that is (a) untenable and (b) already overcome in the *Logic*. That position necessitates that if all 'determination' occurs only by predication, the particular in question in this extended example must remain a 'bare' particular, in itself essenceless, or ineffable, inarticulable, and known, if at all, only by some mysterious 'acquaintance'. Telling us what properties *s* has, but never what *s* is, is precisely the 'indifference' relation Hegel has already criticized in the chapter on measure. At this point in the *Logic* Hegel takes it that he has shown why we must make determinate use of all those determinations, appearances and properties which *s* is not (is not identical with) just in order to say *what s is* (to define *s*'s identity). As he puts it at the conclusion of the chapter on contradiction, 'Finite things, therefore, in their indifferent multiplicity, are simply this, to be contradictory and disrupted within themselves and to return to their ground.'²¹

The clearest example of this internal 'disruption' is, as it was for the Greeks, natural growth or change. Thus a plant 'is not' its seed or blossom or fruit, but neither is it something 'other' than the becoming of these moments.²² But at this Kantian stage of the argument Hegel's point is also much more general. Expressed in that more general way, his claim is that the 'framework' within which experience is apprehended and classified *itself comes to be* in the history of attempts at this apprehension and classification.²³ It is neither posited *a priori*, completely dispensable as in strict empiricism, nor just practically assumed nor, in some inexplicable way, 'more central' to our beliefs. As the ground of all experience, it develops from *its own* 'contradiction', a contradiction that is not fully resolved until the whole, or Absolute, is expressed.

Now, of course, Hegel's full account of 'negation' and 'dialectic' involves much more than this. He is especially concerned elsewhere to explain how these contradictions come about, how any 'position' short of 'absolute knowledge' cannot successfully preserve this 'identity and difference'. But in this section of the *Logic* Hegel takes himself to have established the necessary form of this resolution – 'contradiction' – and to have done so without any 'stupid and trivial confusions'.

V

What all this means in terms of Hegel's overall enterprise should now also be somewhat clearer. Having detailed what he regards as the proper, post-Kantian or transcendental ground or essence, Hegel has now tried to show how that ground is *known*: that it is not merely posited, or miraculously discovered by inspecting the table of judgments. Such a framework itself comes to self-consciousness in the phenomenon of knowledge's history and can be discovered, as he has already shown, by a 'phenomenology' of such a progress by 'spirit'.²⁴ What he takes himself to have done thus far in the *Logic* is to have defended the unique, dialectical way he examines such a progress, especially his own interpretative framework within which he looks for the 'essence' of such becoming. If the interpretation begun above is correct, then, it is a serious misinterpretation of Hegel to accuse him of some extreme *a priori* constructivism in his interpretation of philosophy and history, as if the plot for such a story sprang full grown from his head. Neither would it be correct to claim that the arguments in the *Logic* themselves occur only because of some pre-arranged, arbitrary blueprint. Hegel's claim about essence should make clear that the evaluation of any of his arguments must occur *both in concreto* and in terms of the *whole* case for the development of theoretical and practical *spirit*.

Now, I do not pretend that this is a fully adequate defence of Hegel, and it certainly is not close to the full Hegelian story. At this point in the *Logic* the 'contradiction' doctrine arrived at – although a great improvement over previous positions, and a central, perhaps the decisive, turn to Hegel's own position – is still radically unstable and requires some 400 more pages of analysis before the whole story is told. The most difficult problem remaining, even if this line of historical and metaphysical analysis can be continued, is how this 'identity' and difference of essence and appearance can be determinately used in the analysis of some philosophical or historical context (or, as Henrich puts it, whether this claim for a 'negation' of Kant's transcendental negation of scepticism has any 'content', whether it amounts to any more than the claim *that* there must be such a further explanation).²⁵ I cannot pursue such issues here. However, I hope that enough has been said above to indicate the kind of relevance Hegel's *Logic* has for the rest of his work, to outline his interpretation of the problem of contradiction and to sketch and briefly defend his own initial position on that issue. The most important consequence of that position seems to me to be that, if followed through successfully, it allows Hegel to claim correctly that he has completely integrated the dominant themes of the history of philosophy into a unique position, and that he has thus earned his claim to be the first and last 'philosopher of the history of philosophy', ending his case with, literally,

no position of his own other than that recollected history. He would thus have shown some warrant for the claim,

It is of the greatest importance to perceive and to bear in mind this nature of the reflective determinations we have just considered; namely that their truth consists only in their relation to one another; without this knowledge, not a single step can really be taken in philosophy.²⁶

Notes

1 It remains true that many of the most detailed studies of the *Logic* are by such nineteenth-century scholars as A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1840); E. V. Hartmann, *Die dialektische Methode* (Berlin, 1868); K. Werder, *Logik* (Berlin, 1841); H. Ulrici, *Über Prinzip und Methode der Hegelschen Philosophie* (Halle, 1841); and K. Fischer, *Spekulative Charakteristik und Kritik des Hegelschen Systems* (Erlangen, 1845). See Dieter Henrich's account of these interpretations in *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), pp. 73–94.

2 *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1971), hereafter cited as *WL*; trans. A. V. Miller, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), hereafter cited as *SL*.

3 Some of the most prominent references to the priority of the *Logic* occur in: *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 28, 130, 132–9; *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 4, 14; *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), pp. 805–8; and the claims made for logic in the *WL* itself, pp. 23–47 (*SL*, pp. 43–64).

4 *WL*, 2:58 (*SL*, p. 439).

5 *WL*, 2:61 (*SL*, 442).

6 *WL*, 2:61–2 (*SL*, p. 442).

7 Bertrand Russell, 'Logic as the Essence of Philosophy', in I. M. Copi and J. A. Gould, eds., *Readings on Logic* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 78.

8 *WL*, 2:3 (*SL*, p. 389).

9 *WL*, 2:9 (*SL*, p. 393).

10 *WL*, 2:7 (*SL*, p. 394).

11 *WL*, 1:387–98 (*SL*, pp. 375–85). For a discussion of this section, and its role in making necessary what he calls a 'two-tiered' category, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 256–7. Taylor's remarks on Book 2 are often clear and helpful, but he rushes very quickly through the section we are interested in here (see pp. 260–2). A much more detailed analysis of the general issue at stake in the transition from a *Seinslogik* to a *Wesenslogik* can be found in Henrich, 'Hegels Logik der Reflexion', *Hegel im Kontext*, pp. 95–156. Henrich argues that much of what is at stake in this transition involves a variation in meaning (a *Bedeutungsverschiebung*) in the concept of 'immediacy', shifting from a relationless, independent ('nur mit sich') *Unmittelbarkeit* to a determinate, but self-mediated, or internally determined, essence.

12 It can now be seen that Shaftesbury's views on the moral sense support my analysis of (2) in section II. The affections generated by the moral sense are

repeatedly called natural, as I noted above, although their intentional objects are sometimes actions that work to the ill of the kind or species.

13 See his remarks on Spinoza: 'Absolute indifference may seem to be the fundamental determination of Spinoza's substance' (WL, 1:396 (SL, p. 382)). 'With Spinoza, the moment of difference – attributes, thought, and extension, then the modes too, the affections, and every other determination – is introduced quite empirically; it is intellect, itself a mode, which is the source of the differentiation.' Or, 'Substance is not determined as self-differentiating, not as subject' (WL, 1:396 (SL, p. 383)).

14 Of course, this characterization hardly does full justice to Hegel's view of scepticism. A fairer account would have to deal with the entire section on *Schein* (WL, 2:8–23 (SL, pp. 394–408)).

15 WL, 1:397–8 (SL, p. 384).

16 Given the terms Henrich uses, as noted earlier (n. 11), his argument establishes the identity of the two concepts of 'immediacy' used in Books 1 and 2, pp. 116–17. For a detailed analysis of this case, see Henrich's section on 'Setzen und Voraussetzen', pp. 117–25. Also quite helpful are the introductory remarks made by Peter Rohs, *Form und Grund, Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 6* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1969), pp. 11–76.

17 This point is stated well in Stanley Rosen, *G. W. F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* (Hew Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 109.

18 WL, 2:22 (SL, p. 407).

19 WL, 2:23 (SL, p. 408).

20 A fuller discussion of the issues involved here can be found in Richard E. Aquila, 'Predication and Hegel's Metaphysics', *Kant-Studien* 64 (1973): 231–45.

21 WL 2:62 (SL, p. 443).

22 See a more extended use of this same example in Herbert Marcuse, *Hegels Ontologie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1968), p. 78.

23 For some brief indications of the relevance of this claim to modern theories of *Bedeutungswandel* (especially Kuhn and Feyerabend), see Henrich, 'Hegels Logik der Reflexion', p. 138.

24 I do not intend, of course, by such brief formulations, to indicate a full resolution of the difficulty of interpreting the relation between Hegel's *Phenomenology* and his *Logic*. At its most serious, that issue involves the proper relation between ordinary, or pre-scientific, consciousness and reflective, or philosophic, consciousness and is well beyond the scope of this essay. I can only point here to recent, excellent discussions of the issues: H. F. Fulda, *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975); Otto Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Freiburg and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1973); and chapter 6 of Rosen, pp. 123–50.

25 See Henrich, 'Hegels Logik der Reflexion', pp. 135, 151ff.

26 WL, 2:56 (SL, p. 438).

Essence and time in Hegel

Joseph C. Flay

Some problems with time and history

It is tempting to understand Hegel as a philosopher belonging to the tradition which began with the pre-Socratics, was set in its path definitively by Plato, and culminated with Hegel himself. Hegel's place in that tradition cannot be denied, but it must be qualified; for with this understanding goes a claim that Hegel conceived of himself as the philosopher at 'the end of history'.¹ Hegel is understood to have articulated a system of philosophy which gave us the truth for all time, future as well as past. Time is annulled, cancelled, negated, and, at least in philosophy, we are faced with eternity. This interpretation of Hegel, however, leaves us with too many problems. In general, it must either ignore or deny the radically temporal aspects of Hegel, relegating them to 'a young Hegel', either identifying time and eternity or simply denying the essentiality of time for Hegel. All of these strategies, and the eternalist interpretation which necessitates them, must be rejected as one-sided; for the interpretation leaves unaddressed Hegel's rejection, in his 'mature' years, of such an eternalism. Furthermore, the interpretation is based upon an unexamined presupposition that if we are going to have metaphysics, then we must have a system which either transcends or absorbs history and time. This was not a presupposition shared by Hegel, at least not in its usual sense.²

Those who hold such an eternalist interpretation of Hegel have not created it from whole cloth; they have derived it from a serious reading. It is undeniable that Hegel characterized his *Science of Logic* as the mind of God before the creation of nature and finite spirit; that he spoke of his philosophy as something concerned only with eternal truth; that he identified his own position as culminating the philosophical tradition which had begun with the ancient Greeks; and that he held that Chris-

tianity had the truth, albeit in inadequate form. These and many other Hegelian theses serve to justify an eternalist interpretation. But alongside these, there are other theses which seem to deny such an eternalism. So far as I know, when Hegel speaks explicitly of the end of history, he always does so with the qualification, 'up to our own time'. Second, he insists that philosophy too is tied to its epoch. Third, he holds (what could be taken as a consequence of this) that no philosophy applies to the future, either in an explanatory way or as guidance for conduct. Together with this there is the metaphor of the Owl of Minerva and the thesis that philosophy speaks only to the real historical past. Fourth, there is the clear position that history is not at an end, that in the New World we shall see the beginning of a new epoch, indeed, that Hegel himself stands at the beginning of this new epoch. All of these would be explained away by the 'eternalist' interpretation; for that interpretation holds that *by definition* truth must be something constant and unchanging and thus tied (whether through time or not through time) to eternity. Was Hegel, then, simply inconsistent, holding contradictory positions (in the bad sense of 'contradiction') and thus vitiating his philosophy?

Hegel will fit neither the eternalist mould suggested by the eternalist thesis nor the radical historicist one suggested by his discussion of time when taken in an isolated way. His position is paradoxical, and intentionally so. In the present paper I want to try to show that this tension between time and eternity – in respect to philosophy, but in general as well – derives from a misconception of Hegel's view of time and of his view of essence.

Hegel's doctrine of essence³

Hegel's doctrine of essence arises as a consequence of his doctrine of being. The doctrine of being contains a dialectical critique of those traditional categories which purported to establish the nature of being, that is to say, which purported to establish the nature of the *happening* of whatever exists. Hegel begins by showing that *if* one holds that being is pure and without determinations, excluding both non-being and becoming, then being becomes identical with non-being, which contradicts the original intention as well as the truth about reality. Being can satisfy its originally intended sense and remain distinct from non-being only if it is related to non-being in the two ways in which that relation occurs in becoming. So, the truth of being is becoming, that is to say, being does not exclude becoming, but rather *is* becoming. Parmenides' 'it is' (*esti*) refers us in fact to becoming, not to pure being; and to be within the movement of becoming is to be determinate or to have existence (*Dasein*).⁴

To begin with, this critique and the positive position which emerges from it mean that it is impossible for there to be anything without negation, and therefore impossible for there to be any situation in which what-is would exclude finitude and mediation. The upshot of this, which eventually leads to the need for a discussion of essence, is that while everything has a measure – as the ancients already understood, measure is a requirement for both being and intelligibility – there is no ultimate measure for all measures which itself would not be measured. Being is such that there is, ultimately, measurelessness *unless* we accept, as the truth about the character of being as determinate being (*Dasein*), that the 'absolute' measure is simply the multitude of measures in terms of which certain 'things' are the measures for other 'things'.

We are here forced to give up the usual assumption of metaphysics (most often, in a question-begging way, turned into a conclusion) that if there is going to be any measure at all, be it predominately quantitative or qualitative, there must be a measure for what is to count as a measure, a measure for all measures, an ultimate unity of measure.⁵ From the ancient *moira* of Parmenides, which 'fixed all things from the beginning', to the regulative ideas of Kant, a fixed and ultimate measure, either real or ideal, had been held to be necessary for the existence and intelligibility of what-is. Hegel's critique shows us that *that* claim for an ultimate measure is unwarranted and that, instead, each and every thing as well as the whole of things is simply a system of many different internal measures which operate simultaneously and spontaneously.

The truth of being, then, can be characterized as a situation in which what is situated has become situated by whatever else is situated in the situation. There is no absolute *prius* here; for the situation is constituted only by what is situated, what is situated is only situated in terms of something else situated in the situation, and all that which is situated is so in terms of the situation. There is here complete reciprocity. *The* complete reality – *the* totality – *is* this reciprocity itself.⁶ This seems to leave us, however, with an ungrounded, ultimately unintelligible reality; for we will end either in the infinite regress problem or in the problems involved in a vicious circle.

The doctrine of essence involves the attempt to determine the structure of this reciprocal constitution of beings.⁷ Traditionally there were distinctions made between the following sorts of pairs, the first member of which was held to fix or order the second: essence as what is essential, as opposed to the inessential or accidental; essence as the abiding reality, as opposed to mere show or the ephemerality of appearances; the fundamental law on the basis of which the positing of what-is occurs, and the dependent, posited being; identity, as opposed to difference; ground, as opposed to what is grounded; form, as opposed to matter and content; whole, as opposed to parts; force, as opposed to its mere expression;

inner, as opposed to outer; the absolute, as opposed to its expression as attributes and modifications; necessity, as opposed to contingency; substance, as opposed to accident; and cause, as opposed to effect. In each of these, the first member of the pair was taken as something eternal, stable, lasting and/or self-identical, while the second was seen as temporal, unstable, ephemeral and/or differentiated. The task of the tradition was to make constant and universally intelligible the measure of all measures, i.e. to articulate an overarching power or structure which would give unity and eternal stability to what-is by making a hierarchy of each pair with the first member ordering the second, and by making a hierarchy of the pairs themselves with the more general preceding the relatively specific.

Hegel's critique in the doctrine of essence shows that this attempt is a failure, on the grounds that a self-contradiction is generated if one holds to the general hierarchical thesis. Hegel's argument is that, on the one hand, if one intends to have the respective members of the pairs exclude each other with a priority determined by the ordering, one will end up, as one did in the doctrine of being, with the pairs not excluding each other, thereby destroying the efficacy of the hierarchical ordering.⁸ On the other hand, if one understands the true connection between each of the pairs and between the pairs themselves – a connection which effaces the exclusiveness, separation and priority – one will have truly articulated the structure of the dialectic of measured being. I cannot, at present, discuss this critique in detail. I shall only offer a sketch of several crucial categories.

The category 'essence' is taken, at first, to be what is 'in back of' or 'at the ground of' this show of being which we have seen to be most effectively characterized as a system of reciprocally determining measures, without an ultimate measure transcending them. The traditional solution to the problem of measurelessness, however, brings us to self-contradiction; for if one separates essence from the show of being and counts the latter as illusory, accidental or separated in any way from essence, then essence itself loses its meaning: the essence would be the essence of what is illusory, accidental or separate, and therefore unrelated to what is supposed to be its essence. Essence, in truth, is being reflected into itself (cf. *WL*, v. 2, pp. 7–23; *SL*, pp. 394–408). No sort of distinction between reality (essence) and appearance (being) as exclusive of each other is therefore tenable if one is to comprehend essence.

The matter of understanding correctly the relation between being and essence is sharpened by Hegel's discussion of 'presupposition' (*Voraussetzung*) and 'the posited' (*das Gesetzt*); for what is at issue is a question of the soundness of separating essence as the absolute presupposition of what-is from the being of what-is as the posited. That is to say, it was held generally in the tradition, for the sake of giving a stable ground to

beings, that something is to be taken as presupposition and as separate from and independent of the posited. When this position is examined, however, there is again crippling self-contradiction; for a presupposition must itself presuppose that which presupposes it, and therefore that which shows itself in such and such a manner and has been posited by essence is the presupposition for essence. Presupposition 'P' would not be presupposition 'P' without phenomenon 'F', and thus presupposes the phenomenon of which it is the presupposition (*WL*, v. 2, pp. 15–16; *SL*, pp. 401–2).

This is not to destroy the distinction between presupposition and posited or between essence and being; it is to show that, contrary to the traditional conception of their relation, they reciprocally determine each other, and that such reciprocal determination or self- and intro-reflection cannot involve any two-level thesis about reality.⁹ One loses, in general, the real sense of essence if one separates it from being (*Dasein*) and from beings (*Daseiende*).

With this analysis we are already on the way to Hegel's conclusion about essence: essence is going to turn out to be nothing other than the measured, or what exists. But first let us see how this further unfolds. These first conclusions about essence as opposed to being which I have just discussed are now followed by a dialectical analysis of the essentialities or determinations of reflection (*Wesenheiten oder Reflexionsbestimmungen*), which begin to spell out the structure of the thoroughgoing reciprocal determination of what-is by what-is itself. These *Wesenheiten* are the categories of 'identity' and 'difference'. The latter is of four kinds: diversity (*Verschiedenheit*), unlikeness (*Ungleichheit*), opposition (*Entgegensetzung*) and contradiction (*Widerspruch*). The basic proposition of the traditional understanding of essence is that it involves simple identity-with-self through all apparent change and through all accidents, thus excluding difference. Identity is the relation of a thing with itself such that it is what it is and is nothing else.

What Hegel uncovers through his dialectical examination of this doctrine is that identity, or a thing being what it is, involves not only a thing *being what it is*, but also a thing *not being what it is not*. There is therefore an element of difference implicit in a thing being what it is which is lost if one separates identity and difference since, in this latter case, 'A equals A' should be reducible, without loss, to 'A'. But it cannot be: for as is clearly recognized by the tradition, the formula 'A equals A' is, fully stated, 'A equals A does not equal not-A'. Something is itself only on condition that it is not something else, i.e. only on condition that it has difference as part of its constitution. Difference is therefore essential to identity. In order to explicate this relation between identity and difference, I will discuss briefly diversity and opposition, and then show the sense Hegel consequently gives to the category 'contradiction'.

In diversity, there is simply a multitude of things, externally related. Each thing simply is what it is, and is not supposed to be in any way determined by what is around it or by what is different from it. But even here we can see that there is difference and that the kind of difference involved in diversity constitutes the kind of unity or identity which belongs to the diverse collection of things as a collection and to the things themselves which are in the collection: (1) the collection is determined as simply a collection, simply a juxtaposition (for example, several pairs of people playing chess), each thing *vis-à-vis* the collection *indifferently maintaining its difference* from the other things. (2) Each of the items in the collection has an identity which is independent of the things around it, but by that very characterization is *different from* the other things in a particular way; for if it were not different, it could not be independent. Thus, even though the differences are a matter of indifference – take the example of the group of people, unrelated to each other, sitting in a room; several people could leave and others could take their places, but the people who remain from before would still be the same people and we would still have simply a collection of people sitting in a room – and even though the differences are a matter of indifference, whatever the collection is, difference still plays its part. A comparison with opposition will make more clear the significance of the kind of difference diversity involves.

The category of opposition (*Entgegensetzen*) connotes a different determinative role for difference; for in opposition the difference involved is a difference which makes a difference. That is to say, each difference in an opposition affects the specific identity of the other side of the difference and affects the identity of the relevant whole. Take the example now, not of a random collection of people unrelated to each other, but rather a collection made up of two chess players, both of them masters, one of them being the present world champion. If, in one case, the other player is the leading contender for the champion's position, and if this is an official game, then the identity of the one player is, to be specific, 'the world champion with the title at stake', and the identity of the other is that of 'the challenger for the world championship'. Here it is the difference from the other which gives specific identity to each player and to the collection of people (the two chess masters) as a whole. If, however, the other player is simply another master and not the contender, and if the game is not official, then the identity of the champion is simply that of 'the world champion engaged in a game with another master', and the identity of the other that of 'a master playing the world champion'. The difference in each case changes the identity of each player. On the level of the game as a whole, its identity is appropriately changed as well, depending on the way in which it is constituted by those playing.

The major point here is that 'identity' is not a univocal term; what it

means depends upon the nature of the difference involved in the identity. This means that essence is dependent upon difference and that difference depends upon what happens to be the case; and this is why, later, we find that absolute necessity and actuality are constituted by contingency. Unless we understand identity in this way, identity will be simple emptiness, a form of pure, empty being; for without difference as constitutive, every identity would be identical to every other identity and thus identity would not individualize as it should. It is in this sense that all forms of difference are 'implicitly contradiction; for [difference in each case] is the unity of sides which are, only in so far as they are not one – and [on the other hand] is the separation of sides which are, only as separated in the same relation' (*WL*, v. 2, p. 49; *SL*, p. 431). The positive, specific identity of anything (at the appropriate level) is what it is only because it is a thing which-is-not-what-it-is-not. Thus, as we saw from the beginning, A equals A only because A does not equal not-A: not-A as essence is what gives identity to A. Hegel's doctrine of contradiction is therefore not a denial of the law of non-contradiction, but a thorough examination of that law. The distinction between A and not-A is not destroyed; on the contrary, only in terms of Hegel's analysis can it be preserved.

Hegel's analysis of presupposition and identity has the following consequences. First, the discussion of ground is radically changed. What we find is (1) that ground cannot be simply an undetermined, unconditioned X which determines and conditions everything else (taken in a relevant way); and (2) that ground is not a simple, abstract identity. The ground of anything – i.e. its sufficient reason – is the intro-reflected unity of the differences found in the conditions which give it identity. But this set of conditions cannot be something beneath or behind the things conditioned; for our analysis of both reflection and identity showed this. This then means that it is the realm of being itself which constitutes essence as the ground of what-is. The absolutely unconditioned is only the totality of conditions themselves, each of which is itself conditioned by the different conditions among which it finds itself.¹⁰ Essence and existence are united, with 'existence' signifying the positive, posited being-there of what-is and with 'essence' signifying the mediated, correlative, reciprocal conditioning of what-is. With this we have articulated at a first level the structure of the reciprocal determination of what-is by itself: the structure is determined through difference.

The consequence of this is that actuality (*Wirklichkeit*, literally what is effective and actual in that sense) in its relation to necessity and contingency cannot be merely formally conceived. If what exists is determinative as difference to the essence or identity of anything, then (1) what contingently exists is determinative, (2) as determinative it constitutes real necessity (as opposed to formal necessity), and (3) absolute actuality is nothing other than this determination of what-is by conditions which,

although originally contingent, are necessary once they are existent. Becoming or being-there (*Dasein*) has its measure structured by itself. A whole is no more or less ground for parts than parts are for a whole; substance is no more presupposition for anything than are accidents. What operates as cause of anything is itself caused, both by other things, and by the effect itself – analogously with presupposition, a cause cannot be a cause without having an effect, and thus is dependent upon the effect. Further, both the cause and its causes exist in a thoroughgoing reciprocity of causes and effects.

The 'absolute relation' or final category of essence shows us the self-determination of what-is, embracing a necessity which involves nothing other than this self-determination. But what is determined by itself is free, and therefore essence as much embraces freedom as it does absolute necessity. Absolute and effective actuality is constituted not *a priori*, but *post hoc* as the result of what has contingently occurred. All the conditions in force in a given situation are the effective measure of that situation, i.e. are what make the situation *what it is*, i.e. *what it has become*, i.e. what it *essentially* is. And, in turn, each of the conditions is itself the condition which it is only due to the presence of other conditions. What-is is therefore both necessary and contingent, but at the same time the distinction is preserved. What is contingent involves the coming-into-being and the disappearing of some things as conditions for other things; what is necessary is the state of affairs in which the coming-into-being and the disappearing of these certain things has occurred. This gives us the definition of essence as what has been: *das Wesen ist was gewesen ist*.

Hegel's view of time

There are obvious implications of this doctrine of essence for temporal existence. We have already, in fact, shown the logical basis for Hegel's statements about time and philosophy; for since essence deals with what has been, and since philosophy is an instance of the concept which grasps this 'has-been', making it present for thought, no truth concerning being is available to us which would concern what is not-yet in the sense in which the future is not-yet. In Hegel's discussion of time this relation between philosophy and the future is made clear. First, the 'dimensions of time, *present*, *future* and *past*, are the *becoming* of externality as such, and the resolution of it into the differences of being as passing over into nothing, and of nothing as passing over into being'.¹¹ Second, there are two things to be understood from the way in which becoming, which is concrete being, expresses itself: (1) 'Time . . . is that being which, inasmuch as it is, it is *not*, and inasmuch as it is *not*, it is' (*Enz.*, § 258). (2)

The goal of time 'is the point which is its past; and this is the truth of time, that the goal is not the future but the past'.¹² The future is, rather, the origin of time. Since time is then equated with becoming, i.e. with becoming as the concept externalized, the analysis of becoming given above must be understood appropriately.¹³ The goal of time, i.e. of the becoming of things, is the past, i.e. to be not as what *is* as having been. But this, again, was precisely the description given of essence: *das Wesen ist was gewesen ist*.

This, then, allows us to understand the distinction Hegel makes between philosophy as eternal and the history of philosophy as temporal, while identifying philosophy with the history of philosophy. Philosophy, he writes,

does not stand beyond its time, it is knowledge of the substantial character of its time . . . Philosophy, on the other hand, does stand beyond its time in respect to form, since, as the thinking of that which is the substantial spirit of itself, it transforms it into an object. In so far as philosophy is within the spirit of the time, spirit is its determined worldly content (*ihr bestimmter weltlicher Inhalt*). At the same time, however, it is also beyond spirit as a knowing of [spirit] placing it over against itself (*stellt ihn sich gegenüber*); but this is only a matter of form (*formell*), for it in truth has no other content than spirit. This knowing itself is to be sure the actuality of spirit, the self-knowing of spirit; thus the formal difference is also a real, effective, actual distinction (*ein realer, wirklicher Unterschied*).¹⁴

The configuration of conditions *at any given time* fixes *that time* as what it is, and there is no necessity in a real or an absolute sense until the contingencies have temporally occurred which constitute that necessity. We must be reminded here that the first results of the *Science of Logic* were to show that being *is* becoming and thus that the eternal, which is the object of philosophy, must be understood in terms of becoming. The traditional conception of metaphysics as that which deals with what is eternal in a sense divorced from the conditions of time – in a sense of abstract, pure being – is thereby shown to be impossible by the metaphysics of essence and being.¹⁵ This impossibility does not imply that we cannot have knowledge of a metaphysical kind; rather, it demonstrates that such an 'eternalist' metaphysics is not an adequate metaphysics, and in fact is full of self-destructive contradiction. Hegel's position must therefore be judged in terms of the possibility of an adequate metaphysics and not in terms of the traditional, but inadequate form of metaphysics which makes his own position either inconsistent or a position in regard to which one must ignore his claims for the radically temporal nature of being.¹⁶

As we saw in the study of essence, true essence is the determination of what-is by what-is, the determination of essence by the being of what is constituted through it. In philosophy, it is the philosophizing of the tradition which is the being of philosophy. Thus, what has occurred in the history of philosophy, taken as retrieved and reconstructed and made present as one's own in the playspace of philosophy, is the essence of philosophy itself. What happened to come into being in the past constitutes the necessity of the present, a present which is in the true, and not in the spurious form of eternity.

Thus, there is nothing contradictory or inconsistent in Hegel's position concerning the temporal nature of philosophy as something eternal. He simply rejects, on the basis of his dialectical criticism of the traditional doctrine of being and essence, any conception of infinitude (in any of its forms, including the form of eternity) which conceives of it as outside of or beyond finitude. Philosophy, as absolute spirit, is 'the innermost domain of world-history'. It is the labour of spirit to know itself. 'This work of the spirit to know itself, this activity to find itself, is spirit, the life of spirit itself . . . This work of the human spirit (*des Menscheingesistes*) in the recesses of thought is parallel with all stages of actuality. No philosophy oversteps its time' (*VGP*, v. 3, 456; *LHP*, v. 3, p. 547). The work of philosophers through time constitutes the appearing and being of this 'innermost domain of world-spirit'. But the being of philosophy is precisely where the essence of philosophy is to be found. Since this involves the human spirit and world history, it is necessarily temporal. Only in terms of form – in this case the form of making itself as such an object – does it transcend what-is. But form alone is an abstraction and has actuality only as an element of the reciprocal structuring of what-is by what-is.

Notes

1 One of the most influential commentators in this vein was Alexandre Kojève in his *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947). Unfortunately, only parts of this lecture series have been translated. For some of the relevant sections in English, see *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. by J. H. Nichols (New York, London: Basic Books, 1969). [A further extract is reprinted in Volume II, pp. 311–58. R.S.]

2 There is a more subtle and substantial way in which some explain his view of eternity and time, and that is by taking seriously the religious, Christian foundation for Hegel's thought. But in this case as well, we have but another form of eternalism in metaphysics. Here time is not absorbed, denied, cancelled or ignored, but is incorporated into eternity by the act of the eternal (God) coming into time, undergoing the ultimate temporal condition of time-bound finitude (death), and then, uniting the two first moments in the form of spirit (the Holy Spirit), the infinite (eternal) subsists through the finite (temporal). But

it is, in the end, none the less eternalist. See, for example, the subtle analyses of John Burbidge in 'Concept and Time in Hegel', *Dialogue* 12 (1973): 403–21, and Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's 'Phenomenology'* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities, 1979). See also Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans. by David E. Green (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964).

3 This section derives from a paper read to the Merleau-Ponty Circle, and to appear in a volume containing the proceedings.

4 G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1963), v. 1, pp. 66–95; hereafter cited as 'WL'. The English translation used, for the most part, is that of A. V. Miller, *Science of Logic* (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities, 1969), pp. 82–108; hereafter cited as 'SL'. For the conclusion about being and becoming, see especially WL, v. 1, pp. 93–5; SL, pp. 106–8.

5 WL, v. 1, pp. 336–98; SL, pp. 327–85. For the discussion of measurelessness and how this becomes indifference to measure, see WL, v. 1, pp. 384–92; SL, pp. 371–9.

6 The category of measure is highly problematic, but I think that the situation, the situated, and the situating of the situated (translating *Zustand* as 'situation') are close to Hegel's meaning at the end of his discussion. In discussing indifference Hegel calls us back to his introductory discussion of measure in terms of Parmenides and Spinoza (WL, v. 1, pp. 338–9; SL, p. 329). In the opening discussion of absolute indifference he tries to specify what this means in terms of measure by comparing this absolute indifference with the indifference found first in pure being and then in pure quantity. In contrast to these latter kinds of indifference, 'the indifference which can be called absolute is the indifference which, *through the negation of every determinateness of being*, i.e., of quality, quantity, and their at first immediate unity, measure, is a process of *self-mediation*, resulting in a simple unity. Any determinateness it still possesses is only a *Zustand*, i.e., something qualitative and external which has indifference for a *substrate* (*ein Substrat*)' (WL, v. 1, pp. 387–8; SL, p. 375). This is then further specified by making two points. The first is that the 'reduction of measure relations which at first ranked as self-subsistent measures, establishes their common substrate; this is their continuation into one another and hence the indivisible self-subsistent measure which is *wholly* present in its differentiations' (WL, v. 1, p. 388; SL, pp. 375–6). The second is that as 'this indifference, being is now the specification of measure no longer in its immediacy, but measure as developed in the manner just indicated; it is *indifference* first as *in itself*, the whole of the determinations of being which are resolved into this unity and secondly, as a *determinate being* (*Dasein*), as a totality of the posited realization, in which the moments themselves are implicitly the totality of the indifference, borne by this latter as their unity' (WL, v. 1, p. 390; SL, p. 377). The consequence for the things measured is the thoroughgoing reciprocity of which I have spoken. For this, see his discussion of Spinoza as an example of the indifference problem in terms of substance: WL, v. 1, p. 396–7; SL, pp. 382–3.

7 See WL, v. 1, pp. 339–40; SL, pp. 329–30, where Hegel first speaks, in an introductory way, of the relation between measure and essence. He ends the formal discussion of being with the following: 'This unity thus posited as the totality of the process of determining, in which it is itself determined as indifference, is a contradiction in every respect; it therefore has to be *posited* as sublating this its contradictory nature and acquiring the character of a self-determined, self-subsistent being which has for its result and truth not the unity which is merely

indifferent, but that immanently negative and absolute unity which is called essence' (WL, v. 1, p. 392; SL, p. 379).

8 The meaning of the term 'contradiction' in the phrase 'contradicting oneself' is quite different from the term as a positive element of metaphysics. See my discussion below, p. 404.

9 Not even Aristotle and those who follow him in understanding essence as immanent escape this criticism; for they will not accept the reciprocity of determination. Further, they abstract from the individual being in order to get essence.

10 As Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia*, § 123, 'existence is the immediate unity of reflection-into-self and reflection-into-another. It follows from this that existence is the indefinite multitude of existents as reflected-into-themselves, which at the same time equally throw light upon one another – which, in short, are correlative, and form a world of reciprocal dependence and of infinite inter-connection between grounds and consequents. The grounds are themselves existences; and the existents in like manner are in many directions grounds as well as consequents.'

11 *Enz*, § 259. Only now do we begin to understand 'becoming' in its spatio-temporal form.

12 *Enz*, § 261, *Zusatz*. We come to understand 'becoming' or being-there (*Dasein*), as it is articulated in these last three passages, as something different from what might be expected from the *Logic*'s discussion of 'becoming' as a movement from nothing into being and then from being into nothing. The first impulse is to understand this as a linear movement from past to present to future. But this discussion of concrete becoming in the philosophy of nature changes this. The movement constituting becoming originates in the future. Thus the movement from nothing to being is a movement from future into present and, since the past is the destination of time, the movement from being to nothing is a movement from the present into the past.

13 'it is not *in* time that everything comes to be and passes away; rather time itself is *becoming*' (*Enz*, § 258, Remark). This identification is not only interesting in itself, but when put together with another identification which Hegel gives to time, demands a rethinking of what Hegel meant by time. The other identification occurs near the end of the *Phenomenology*: 'Time is the concept itself that is *there* and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition . . . [it] is the externally intuited pure self which is *not grasped* by the self, the merely intuited concept. When the concept grasps itself it sets aside its time-form, comprehends intuition, and is a comprehending and comprehended intuition' (*Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 558; *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), p. 487). The importance of 'form' here must also be compared with his discussion of the form of time noted below in the discussion leading to note 14.

14 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), v. 1, pp. 74–5; hereafter cited as 'VGP'. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Humanities, 1963), v. 1, pp. 54–5; hereafter cited as 'LHP'. I have altered the translation where I felt that it was needed, but have not noted this. Compare the following: after sketching the development in time of various philosophies, Hegel writes that this 'existence' (*Dasein*) and therefore this being-in-time (*In-der-Zeit-Sein*) is a moment not only of individual consciousness in general, which as such is essentially finite, but also of the development of the philosophical idea in the element of thought. For the idea,

conceived of at rest (*in ihre Ruhe gedacht*), is indeed timeless; to think of it at rest, to preserve it in the form of immediacy, is equivalent to [thinking the idea] in inner intuition (*ist gleichbedeutend mit der inneren Anschauung derselben*). But the idea as concrete, as unity of differences, as shown above, is essentially not at rest, and its existence (*Dasein*) is not essentially intuition, but rather as distinction within itself and therefore development it comes into existence within its self and into externality in the element of thinking. Thus pure philosophy appears in thinking as an existence (*Existenz*) advancing in time' (*VGP*, v. 1, pp. 51–2; *LHP*, v. 1, pp. 32–3).

15 For the explicit discussion of eternity in relation to time, see *Enz.*, § 258, Remark and *Zusatz*. If one is to have an adequate picture of what is developed here, it will be necessary to analyse the development of the concept 'time' throughout the sciences of the *Encyclopaedia*. For some idea of this see Hegel's discussion in *VGP*, v. 1, pp. 23–4, footnote 10; pp. 57–8; *LHP*, v. 1, pp. 5, 39.

16 There is no need, then, to attempt to exclude from consideration passages such as the following: 'This is the function of our own and of every age: to grasp the knowledge which is already existing, to make it our own, and in so doing to develop it still further and to raise it to a higher level. In thus appropriating it to ourselves we make it into something different from what it was before. On the presupposition of an already existing intellectual world which is transformed in our appropriation of it, depends the fact that philosophy can only arise in connection with previous philosophy, from which of necessity it has arisen. The course of history does not show us the becoming of things foreign to us, but the becoming of ourselves and of our own knowledge' (*VGP*, v. 1, p. 22; *LHP*, v. 1, pp. 3–4). See also his remarks in *VGP*, v. 1, p. 22; *LHP*, v. 1, p. 45; and at the end of his lectures, *VGP*, v. 3, pp. 454–7, 460–2; *LHP*, v. 3, pp. 545–8, 551–3.

Hegel's theory of the concept

Merold Westphal

'The subject-matter of the philosophical science of right is the Idea of right, i.e., the concept of right together with the actualization of that concept.' So begins the Introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Since Hegel defines right in terms of freedom¹ his account of the actualization of that concept is the story of how freedom is actual in the modern world. This occupies almost the entirety of Hegel's text. Thus the concept of freedom is developed for the most part not by itself but in the context of narrating its actualization. But if either the reader or the writer is to have any way of recognizing what counts in the modern world as the actuality of freedom, some prior understanding of the meaning of freedom seems to be required. It is this which the Introduction seeks to provide, a purely conceptual analysis of freedom.

This analysis will of necessity be incomplete, just because of its *a priori* character. 'The shapes which the concept assumes in the course of its actualization are indispensable for the knowledge of the concept itself' (*PR*, § 1). To repeat, it is only when we grasp 'the concept of right *together with* the actualization of that concept' (my italics) that we can adequately grasp that concept. The adequate conceptual grasp of any content can never be reached by conceptual analysis alone. Yet a prior understanding of the concept is needed to guide the discovery of that actualization of freedom which alone can provide us with an adequate conceptual grasp. It is tempting to think of this prior understanding in terms of hypothesis or conjecture, but we know from his discussions of Reinhold that Hegel rejects this suggestion out of hand.² Whence this pre-understanding of freedom, then? There can be only one Hegelian answer – from the Logic. For in Hegelian philosophy it is always the Logic which provides the conceptual wherewithal for any truly speculative understanding of nature or spirit.

The conceptual analysis of freedom presented in the Introduction to

the *Philosophy of Right* does not disappoint these expectations. It is indeed derived from the Logic, in particular from the analysis of the Concept as universal, particular (or specific) and individual. This triadic structure of the Concept thus becomes the basis for getting at the genuinely speculative element in Hegel's political philosophy. My purpose here, however, is just the opposite. It is to throw a little light on the logic of the Concept by reflecting on Hegel's employment of the categories Universality, Particularity and Individuality in developing a pre-understanding of freedom.

This procedure will no doubt make some readers feel uncomfortable. The Logic, we will be told, is intelligible in its own right, and is first to be understood by itself as pure thought before any consideration of its employment can be legitimated. That there is something genuinely Hegelian about this response I shall not deny. But there is something equally Hegelian about my own procedure as well. After all, for Hegel the truth is the whole, and no part of philosophical science can be fully understood apart from its detailed relations to the others. I have just quoted Hegel's claim that the concept of right or freedom cannot adequately be understood apart from the shapes of its actualization in the world. I am taking this in the strong sense to mean that even the concepts from the Logic which go into spelling out that prevenient concept of freedom to which the Introduction is devoted cannot be adequately understood in and by themselves but only when we see them at work in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere.

It is in this sense that I understand Hegel's 'knowing before you know' (or don't go into the water before you have learned how to swim) critique of critical philosophy. In a paper presented to the Hegel Society of America at Notre Dame in 1972, John Smith reminds us that Hegel praised the critical project of examining the categories and directed his criticism only towards the tendency to separate such criticism from 'first-order' knowing, thus examining the categories while they were 'idling'. 'Hegel's fundamental complaint, then, is that Kant analyzed the categories as functions of thought, not when they were functioning in actual knowing, but only in their status as necessary conditions for knowing.' In support of this suggestion Smith quotes from section 41, *Zusatz* of the *Encyclopaedia*, where Hegel writes, 'So that what we want is to combine in our process of inquiry the *action* of the forms of thought with a criticism of them.'³ This requirement seems to me at best to be only partially satisfied in the Logic itself. Thus it serves as another justification for seeking to understand the Logic in terms of its so-called 'application'. The activity of the categories of Universality, Particularity and Individuality in Hegel's political theory belongs to the deduction, analysis and criticism of them in his Logic.

Methodologically, then, I believe my project has ample Hegelian vali-

dition. But I claim no scientific status for my attempt at interpretation. This humility is strategically motivated, I hasten to confess, for it leaves me free to invoke hypotheses and test them out, which is what I intend to do. My initial hypothesis is that the following sentence from the *Zusatz* to section 7 of the *Philosophy of Right* is the key to the logic of the Concept: 'Freedom in this sense, however, we already possess in the form of feeling – in friendship and love, for instance.' The meaning of my hypothesis is both (a) that the structure of the Concept as Universality, Particularity and Individuality is necessary to an adequate understanding of friendship and love, and (b) that if we think through the meaning of friendship and love adequately we will have developed the structure of the Concept as Universality, Particularity and Individuality. Since I am trying to work towards the Logic and not from it, it is obviously the latter form of the hypothesis which I shall be exploring.

The suggestion that friendship and love are the true meaning of freedom follows a summary of sections 5–7, which define freedom in terms of the triadic structure of the Concept. While Hegel once suggests that Universality, Particularity and Individuality are abstractly the same as Identity, Difference and Ground (*ELW*, § 164 [*The Logic of Hegel*, trans. by William Wallace, Oxford University Press, 1874]), they here function as Indeterminacy, Determination and Self-Determination. Since these categories have an obvious bearing on the question of freedom, the task is to see how the original triad can legitimately be translated into them.

The first equivalence is that of Universality with Indeterminacy. Hegel puts it this way:

The will contains (α) the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires, and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever. This is the unrestricted infinity of absolute abstraction or universality, the pure thought of oneself.

Freedom involves the ability to abstract from every dependence upon an other, and since it is always and only in relation to an other that anything is determinate and not the 'indeterminate immediacy' of pure Being, freedom involves 'my flight from every content as from a restriction' (*PR*, § 5).⁴

There is a freedom which takes this moment of independence as its whole meaning. Theoretically it is 'the Hindu fanaticism of pure contemplation' in which the fundamental structures of the self's being in the world are systematically undermined. Practically it is exhibited in the Terror of the French Revolution, with its 'irreconcilable hatred of every-

thing particular [*jedes Besondere*], i.e. everything determinate in the social order (PR, § 5-z). 'Only in destroying something does this negative will possess the feeling of itself as existent.' This freedom professes to serve some new and better actuality but cannot do so, for any such actuality 'leads at once to some sort of order, to a particularization [*Besonderung*] of organizations and individuals alike; while it is precisely out of the annihilation of particularity [*Besonderung*] and objective characterization that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom proceeds'. Hegel indicates the one-sidedness of this freedom as absolute independence curtly by calling it 'freedom as the Understanding conceives it' (PR, § 5).⁵

The second equivalence is already before us, that of Particularity and Determination, for it matters little whether the content from which this negative freedom flees as from a restriction is called *Besonderheit* or *Bestimmtheit*. But freedom that would be actual cannot flee forever. For 'my willing is not pure willing but the willing of something. A will which, like that expounded in Section 5, wills only the abstract universal, wills nothing and is therefore no will at all' (PR, § 6-z). To will something the will must include the moment of 'the finitude or particularization [*Besonderung*] of the ego', which is described in this way:

(β) At the same time, the ego is also the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to the differentiation, determination, and positing of a determinacy as a content and object. Now further, this content may either be given by nature or engendered by the concept of spirit. (PR, § 6)

This latter qualification is important, for it indicates that the other which cannot be excluded from freedom is of two sorts, natural, that is the impulses and inclinations (*Triebe und Neigungen*) of immediate selfhood in their otherness to rational self-determination, and spiritual, that is both social institutions and concrete other selves in their otherness to the independence of the self who would be free. This second moment, Particularity or Determination, is no less essential to freedom than the first. For the self which can respond to its own natural immediacy and to the other selves around it only by withdrawal or destruction cannot be said to be free. On the other hand, this moment by itself is just as abstract and inadequate as the first. For the self which is only a function of its impulses and inclinations or of the other selves it encounters is no more free than the self which flees from every content as from a restriction. Indeed, it can scarcely be called a self at all.

Only a caricature of freedom arises, then, when either the moment of Universality=Indeterminacy or that of Particularity=Determination is asked by itself to provide a definition. But neither moment can be elimi-

nated from the concept of freedom. What is needed is a genuine unity of the two, antithetical as they seem. We already know that the unity of Universality and Particularity will be called Individuality, and we might guess that the unity of Indeterminacy and Determination will be called Self-Determination, though in both cases, as in calling happiness the highest good, the task of comprehension lies ahead and not behind. Hegel writes:

(γ) The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e., it is individuality. It is the *self-determination* of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e., in its self-identity and universality.

(PR, § 7)

Three comments on this passage may help us get to the heart of the matter. First, it serves to validate the third equivalence, that of Individuality and Self-Determination. Self-determination is defined as the preservation of self-identity in the process of determination. Only that which is in some strong sense individual can endure determination without becoming simply a function of those others through whom this determination is mediated. Such endurance involves the retention of more than that logical self-identity which permits one to be an object of reference or the subject of predication. It requires that real self-identity which is here equated with the moment of universality, which, as we have seen, is the moment of independence.

Second, we are referred directly back to the Logic, where this unity of self-identity and determinateness is central. We can now understand why, when Hegel calls the Concept 'the principle of freedom', he goes right on to say, 'Thus in its *self-identity* it has original and complete determinateness', and, when defining the structure of the Concept in terms of its three moments, he describes Individuality as the unity of Universality and Particularity, 'which negative self-unity has complete and original *determinateness*, without any loss to its *self-identity* or universality'.⁶

Third, Hegel calls this unity of self-identity and determination which constitutes Self-Determination or Individuality 'the innermost secret of speculation', though the Understanding disdains it as 'inconceivable' (PR, § 7). The passage before us indicates both why the synthesis is so easily dismissed as inconceivable and how we may begin to conceive it after all. Self-determination means determination, which means that the self stands in relation to its own negative, to another through whom its determination is mediated. The self is thus *dependent* upon the other for

its determinateness. Yet, if this is to be self-determination, it must be a self-mediating activity, and the self must retain its self-identity and universality, i.e. its *independence*. Hegel here uses one of his favourite locutions, *bei sich bleiben*.⁷ This means to keep control of oneself, to stay conscious and not pass out. The task, which Understanding finds impossible, is so to remain in control of oneself in giving oneself up to the mediating activity of the other that the whole operation can be called a self-mediating activity and not something which happens to me while unconscious, after which I come to again to learn about my new determinateness. It could then be said that 'the ego determines itself insofar as it is the relating of negativity to itself' (PR, § 7), or that the self is *Vermittlung* but not *ein Vermitteltes* (WL, II, 241=SL, 602).

This is possible, on Hegel's account, because self-determination means 'that at one and the same time *the ego posits itself* as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself (PR, § 7).⁸ We have already seen that the self cannot be determinate except in relation to another, and that it cannot be free if this relation is either withdrawal or destruction. But if this other is in some sense itself, the possibility of a more positive relation begins to lose its inconceivability. The only problem is that this solution sounds a bit too Fichtean.⁹ The otherness of the other seems compromised.

At this point Hegel's earlier allusion to the categories of Identity, Difference and Ground is helpful, for it reminds us that for Hegel identity always involves some difference. If the other through whom the self is determined must *in some sense* be identical with that self, we must inquire more carefully what that sense may be. A second formulation from section 7 calls for our attention.

Still, both these moments [self-consciousness as universal and as particular] are only abstractions: what is concrete and true (and everything true is concrete) is the universality which has the particular as its opposite: but [only] that particular which by its reflection into itself has been equalized with the universal.

Here otherness sounds less Fichtean. It has the status of an opposite (*Gegensatz*). But it must have become equalized (*ausgeglichen*) with that to which it stands opposed. We are not told which way the scale must be tipped to bring about this balance. Whether the reflection into itself of the other which confronts the self is a scaling down of its power and activity so that it does not overwhelm the self or a scaling up of its dignity so that its activity is of the same sort as that of the self, the result is that the self and its other are somehow on a par. They are not the same in the sense of numerical identity but of qualitative similarity. This seems the opposite extreme from the Fichtean overtones of the previous formu-

lation. If one thinks of the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology*, for example, it seems that neither way of looking at it will do. For if the other from whom the self seeks the determination of recognition is numerically identical with itself, there can be no acceptance of the claim to human dignity but only the repetition of that claim. While if the other is the same as the self in the weaker sense of being qualitatively similar, equal in being another full-blooded human self, we can see nothing in such equality to weaken the Understanding's suspicion that the self must either destroy the selfhood of the other by becoming its master or give up its own by becoming the slave, in neither case achieving freedom.

Turning to the *Zusatz* to section 7 for help we find a definition of freedom in terms of the three moments of the Concept. It repeats the familiar idea that the self posits itself as its other yet remains by itself in this other; but it provides us with no assistance in making sense out of these Hegelian clichés. Just at this point, however, occurs the sentence which my hypothesis makes central to interpreting Hegel here. 'Freedom in this sense, however, we already possess in the form of feeling – in friendship and love, for instance.' The explanation continues,

Here we are not inherently one-sided; we restrict ourselves gladly in relating ourselves to another, but in this restriction know ourselves as ourselves. In this determinacy a man should not feel himself determined, on the contrary, since he treats the other as other, it is there that he first arrives at the feeling of his own self-hood. Thus freedom lies neither in indeterminacy nor in determinacy; it is both of these at once.

Guided by these descriptions and reminded of whatever experiences of true friendship or love we may have had, we suddenly see how the abstract antithesis between numerical identity and mere qualitative sameness does not exhaust the possibilities. Genuine otherness is preserved, since friendship and love require numerical duality and not numerical identity. Yet we can speak of identity and not mere qualitative sameness, for friends and lovers are not merely different numerical units of the same sort – they constitute together a new reality which they express by saying 'We'. This whole is more than the sum of its parts. As its co-constituents the parts are identical with each other, for each of them simply is that We just as much as each is also a distinct I.¹⁰

Such reflections on the way friends and lovers relate to their counterparts illuminate the kind of identity with difference which the Concept expresses. This confirms Hegel's own view that the theory of the Concept is a theory of freedom, of personality, and of that sense of ego which the slave lacks (*ELW*, § 163-z). When loving intersubjectivity is taken as

basic, two conspicuous features of the logical exposition of the Concept appear in a new light, namely, the ubiquity of the concept of creativity and the transition from Essence to Concept, more specifically, the development of the triadic structure of the Concept from the category of reciprocity.

The creation motif is never far from sight. The Concept is *unendliche, schöpferische Form, freie, schöpferische Tätigkeit*, or simply *schöpferische Macht*. It is *das Formierende und Erschaffende*; and one can speak of *das Schaffen des Begriffs*, or even of the Idea as *Schöpferin der Natur*.¹¹

All this tells us that the Concept is something active and not inert. In its individuality the Concept is *das Wirkende* (EL, § 163). Frequently Hegel expresses this central theme in Aristotelian language, the Concept being related to its objectivity as soul to body or seed to plant.¹² We are given a theory of development which at first appears to be but a restatement of the Aristotelian theory of substantial form as the merger of formal, final and efficient causality. But Aristotle's is a theory of life, not of spirit, and while Hegel recognizes the Concept to be 'the principle of all life' (ELW, § 160-z) and the organic level to be 'the stage of nature at which the Concept emerges' (WL, II, 224=SL, 586), it is only at the level of spirit that its true meaning is manifest. This means that no Aristotelian interpretation of Hegel's creation talk will be adequate. As creative the Concept is *das Wirkende* indeed, but the organic-developmental models of soul-body and seed-plant give at best a partial account of this. For, as we have seen, the theory of the Concept is a theory of intersubjective selfhood and thus of spirit. Its task is to give an account of determinateness through an other such that this 'is not a *limit*, as though it were related to another *beyond* it [*einem Jenseits*]' (WL, II, 245=SL, 605). How does the concept of creation contribute to this central problematic?

The *Zusatz* to section 161 of the *Encyclopaedia* is of special importance in this connection. For while both the original paragraph and the first long paragraph of the *Zusatz* are devoted to the Aristotelian-developmental aspects of the Concept, the final brief paragraph goes beyond this to the level of spirit.

The movement of the concept is as it were to be looked upon merely as play: the other which it sets up is in reality not an other. Or, as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity: not merely has God created a world which confronts Him as an other; He has also from all eternity begotten a Son in whom He, a Spirit, is at home with Himself [*bei sich selbst ist*].

Three models of the self in relation to its other are given here. In play

the other is not really an other, but the figment of the self's active imagination. Remember Puff?

One gray night it happened, Jackie Paper came no more
So Puff the Magic Dragon ceased his fearsome roar.

His head was bent in sorrow, green scales fell like rain
Puff no longer went to play along the cherry lane
Without his lifelong friend, Puff could not be brave
So Puff that mighty dragon sadly slipped into his cave.

The strength of this model is that it completely removes the *Jenseits* character of the other for the self; its weakness is that the other is somewhat ephemeral. The freedom of the child at play is total, but not very real.

The second model is that of God as Creator in relation to the world. Since the world depends on God for its continued existence, it is sometimes viewed as no more truly other to God than Puff was to Jackie Paper. But creation is more often seen as an exercise of omnipotence voluntarily limiting itself, giving genuine otherness to the world. This is the view Hegel has in mind, for while the other of play is 'in reality not an other', when God creates the world it 'confronts him as an other'. The strength of this model is obviously that otherness gains integrity; its weakness that otherness can all too easily emerge once again as a *Jenseits*, outside the reconciliation of the Concept. This possible obstinate otherness is not incorrigible. As Creator God could either destroy the world he has made or, alternatively, abandon it. But we have already seen that destruction and withdrawal are anything but the freedom Hegel is seeking to grasp; and nothing in the concept of Creator suggests that God has any options but these in the face of a world turned hostile.

The third model is that of the eternal love between the Father and the Son. As eternal the Son is truly other, neither imaginary like Puff nor contingent like the world. But while otherness is most complete in this model there is no estrangement or hostility here. For in place of the child's sovereignty over his imaginary playmates and God's over the created world, the relation here is that of reciprocal love. Only in love is even God able to be *bei sich selbst* in his other. Though Hegel doesn't mention it here, this holds for his relation to the world as well. For it is only as Redeemer, not simply as Creator, that God can be at peace with the world. It is the God who loved the world who sent his Son, not to be its Judge but its Saviour (John 3:16-17).

It is now possible to give Hegel's creation talk its proper place in his theory of the Concept. By itself it is not an adequate model of the conceptual structure being developed. But it helps to express two essential

elements of that structure. The first is the active, effective nature of the self as *das Wirkende*. The other is that aspect of love which Hegel especially wishes to highlight, the non-otherness of the most genuinely other (PR, § 158-z). Taken together the three models we have just examined are not just a progressive series. The first two belong to the third as part of its meaning. In love the threatening aspects of otherness are as thoroughly eliminated as in play and creation (but without having to eliminate otherness as such and with it the benefits which only real otherness can confer). In love the other does not owe its existence to me, but we are so related that I feel no need of that sort of power over the other in order to be myself. I can live in the real world without resort to the pathological fantasies in which I elevate myself to the role of Creator and reduce the world to a collective Puff with whom I play in childish sovereignty.¹³

Lest we get carried away here we must remember that the Logic does not try to tell us how or where this freedom as loving reciprocity is to be realized. It only tells us what it is to be free. It does so, however, by calling our attention to the fact that love is only a special form of reciprocity and that there is another reciprocity which is not freedom at all. It is this contrast between two reciprocities which constitutes the transition from Essence to Concept in the Logic.

As a category of Essence Reciprocity expresses a world wholly subject to natural necessity. It is composed of substances, thus of independent and self-sufficient units. It is a world, however, not a chaotic multiplicity, solely because these units do have one mode of relation to one another, causal necessity. Since they are both active and passive, cause and effect in relation to one another, causal necessity has the form of Reciprocity.

In this world independence and identity are mutually exclusive. Causal necessity involves a special form of identity. The effect, being simply the expression or unfolding of the cause, loses its independence and becomes simply an aspect of the cause's career. As the distinction between them vanishes, they become identical. The attempt to see the world exclusively and consistently from this point of view leads to Spinozism, where the world has only one substance in it, or, alternatively, to the Laplacian way of saying the same thing in different language. If, as the category of Reciprocity itself suggests, some plurality is to be preserved, it must be by viewing the units which make up the world in abstraction from their causal relations, as external and contingent in relation to one another. I have no difficulty, for example, viewing the misfortunes of my beloved and bumbling Chicago Cubs as wholly unrelated to the political climate in Washington. In Reciprocity as a category of Essence I alternate between two incompatible viewpoints, one which views the units of the world as mutually indifferent to one another, and one which views them

as so tightly bound together by natural necessity as to lose their independent identity. Clearly neither of these represents freedom in Hegel's sense.

If there is to be a reciprocity which does constitute freedom, it must overcome the mutual exclusiveness of independence and identity. It is in just these terms that Hegel states the transition to the Concept.¹⁴ The truth of necessity is freedom, we are told, and that of substance the Concept. For reciprocity can be seen as infinite, negative self-relation; negative in that it involves the independence of actualities in relation to one another, but infinite self-relation because 'their independence only lies in their identity' (*ELW*, §§ 157–8). This harmony of independence and identity is crucial to freedom. The old identity excludes independence.

The identity [*Einheit*] of the things, which necessity presents as bound to each other and thus bereft of their independence, is at first [i.e. while Reciprocity is still a category of Essence] only inward, and therefore has no existence for those under the yoke of necessity.

(*ELW*, § 158-z)¹⁵

Where identity has this character it not only leaves the so-called individuals 'bereft of their independence' but also deprives them of any awareness or enjoyment of their identity. There is no experience of love or of community. But there is another kind of identity.

It then appears that the members, linked to one another, are not really foreign to each other, being, as it were, at home, and combining with itself [*bei sich selbst ist und mit sich selbst zusammengeht*]. In this way necessity is transfigured into freedom.

(*ELW*, § 158-z)

Just as we have previously seen Hegel describe love as a contradiction and the unity of the concept as inconceivable to the Understanding, we now are reminded that it is not exactly easy to think this unity of identity and independence. 'The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality into the concept, is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passing over and identity with the other independent actuality.' Once again, to help us get headed in the right direction, Hegel tells us that love is what he is talking about, love as the liberation which can also be called I, free spirit, and blessedness (*ELW*, § 159).¹⁶

I have been discussing the theory of the Concept as a theory of freedom rather than as a theory of knowledge, as a theory of the practical rather

than the theoretical self. Of course, Hegel would not have called this part of the *Logic* by the name *Concept* if his theory were not also a theory of knowledge (and the object of knowledge as well). But in spite of saying 'Concept' instead of 'Freedom' when naming the final level of categorial development, Hegel himself seems to give the epistemological part of his theory a secondary place. 'The Concept', he writes,

when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness. True, I have concepts, that is to say, determinate concepts: but the I is the pure Concept itself which, as the Concept, has come into existence.

(*WL*, II, 220=*SL*, 583)

However we interpret this contrast between the self's being the Concept and its having concepts, a complete analysis of Hegel's theory of the Concept would have to develop its epistemological discussions which are constantly and overtly interspersed throughout the discussion of freedom to which I have limited myself up to this point. My first hypothesis, that love is the key to the structure of the Concept, would be enhanced both in strength and in philosophical interest if a second, corollary hypothesis could be established, namely, that the theory of loving intersubjectivity which is the direct meaning of the Concept as a theory of the practical self is the guiding metaphor for the theory of knowledge which has reached the same level of philosophical insight. In other words, knowing, too, is to be understood in its highest form as the non-violent unity of the self and its other. In the space and time remaining to me I can but outline such a reading of Hegel's text.

As a theory of knowledge Hegel regularly contrasts his view of the Concept with that of the Understanding, which views it as an abstract universal, devoid of particularity and individuality. It is thus without content of its own, the mere form of our subjective thought. Two features of this view are especially stressed, the independence of the object and the subjectivity of thinking.

The independence of the object consists in its being unconditioned in relation to the concepts through which it is thought. It is there first, standing ready-made over against the concept, possessed of its being and truth prior to any rendezvous with the concept. The content thus falls on the side of the object. The concept is an empty and inert form which comes to it from without. This kind of thinking is subjective, for it is separated from its truth. The truth is supposed to reside in the content or object, while thinking is entirely the activity of the subject. The abstract universals employed in such thinking are generated, as their name suggests, through the activity of abstracting; and it is the knowing subject who must perform this operation of neglecting some features presented to

consciousness while focusing attention on others. Since it is the contingent purpose of the knower which directs this process, it can also be said that an interest external to the subject matter presides over this whole domain of thinking.

On this view the truth of the object is not an intelligibility or meaning it can reveal to us but rather a brute otherness which we must forge weapons to overcome. Abstract universals are those weapons by means of which we hope to deprive the object of its original independence and render it subject to our purposes and interests. Knowing is the desire to master and dominate. Without any specific reference to technological purposes and interests, Hegel has described the essence of calculative thinking.

Knowledge at the level of the Concept contrasts sharply. This highest kind of knowing, attested by both religion and philosophy (WL, II, 225–6=SL, 587–8), assumes that things have their being and truth by virtue of the Concept at work within them. The form by which they are known is identical with the form by which they are what they are. Since the form is already present in the content Hegel can say, '*dass wir die Begriffe gar nicht bilden*' (EL, § 163–22). We do not need to impose our external purposes on the processes of thought. This is not to say that knowledge, any more than love itself, is entirely devoid of interest. It is to say that the subject no longer seeks to use the object. The guiding interest is no longer the subject's private purpose, but its openness to the object so that the object may reveal both itself and the subject for what they are. In thus giving itself up to the object, the subject does not discover that in ceasing to be the master it has become the slave. The impetus towards domination is undermined as a new identity takes shape. For the form which is the truth of the thing and the form which is the thought of the subject are one and the same.

Hegel, as is his wont, lapses into lyricism.

The universal is therefore *free* power; it is itself and takes its other within its embrace [*greift über sein Anderes über*], but without *doing violence* to it; on the contrary, the universal is, in its other, in peaceful communion with itself. We have called it free power, but it could also be called *free love* and *boundless blessedness*, for it bears itself towards its other as towards *its own self*; in it, it has returned to itself.

(WL, II, 242=SL, 603)¹⁷

We might call this the Golden Rule of the Concept. For Hegel it is the norm for philosophical knowledge as well as for life with our neighbour.

Notes

1 *Philosophy of Right*, § 29. The *Philosophy of Right* and the Lesser Logic of the *Encyclopaedia* will be cited by the paragraph numbers which are common to all editions and with the abbreviations *PR* and *EL*. Where *Zusätze* are indicated, a z will follow the paragraph number. The translations of Knox and Wallace will be followed with minor alterations, mostly pertaining to italics. The *Science of Logic* will be cited with pages from both the Felix Meiner edition, edited by Georg Lasson (*WL*), and the Miller translation (*SL*), which I follow with minor alterations. I have regularly substituted 'concept' for 'notion' as a translation of *Begriff*.

2 *EL*, § 10; *WL* I, 55ff.; and *Differenzschrift, Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg, 1968), IV, 77ff.

3 'Hegel's Critique of Kant', *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. XXVI (March, 1973), pp. 441–5. Italics are Smith's.

4 Cf. *WL*, II, 220=SL, 583; 'Ich aber ist diese *erstlich* reine, sich auf sich beziehende Einheit, und dies nicht unmittelbar, sondern indem es von aller Bestimmtheit und Inhalt abstrahiert und in die Freiheit der schrankenlosen Gleichheit mit sich selbst zurückgeht.'

5 It is helpful to recall Hegel's analysis of scepticism and of the Terror in the *Phenomenology*.

6 *EL*, § 160 and § 163, my italics. Cf. *WL*, II, 219=SL, 582.

7 Hegel uses *bei sich sein* more or less interchangeably with *bei sich bleiben*, though it obviously hasn't quite the active sense of the latter. Present translations frequently render *bei sich* as 'at home'.

8 My italics.

9 Especially in view of Hegel's critique of Fichte in § 6.

10 Cf. Hegel's stress on Rousseau's distinction between *volonté générale* and *volonté de tous*, *EL*, § 163-z, and his analysis of the We constituted in marriage by contrast with that of contract, *PR*, § 75 and § 158ff., with *Zusätze*.

11 These phrases occur, respectively, at *EL*, § 160-z; § 163-z; *WL*, II, 244–5=SL, 605; *WL*, II, 242=SL, 603; *WL*, II, 245=SL, 605; and *WL*, II, 231=SL, 592. Cf. *EL*, § 163-z: 'Rather the Concept is the genuine first; and things are what they are through the action of the Concept, immanent in them, and revealing itself in them. In religious language we express this by saying that God created the world out of nothing. In other words, the world and finite things have issued from the fullness of the divine thoughts and the divine decrees.'

12 *WL*, II, 236=SL, 597; *WL*, II, 242=SL, 602; *EL*, § 161-z; *PR*, § 1-z.

13 Cf. R. D. Laing, *The Self and Others*, Part One.

14 *EL*, § 157–9. Cf. *WL*, II, 214–19=SL, 578–82.

15 Cf. *WL*, II, 218=SL, 581: 'Dieser, die aus der Wechselwirkung resultierende Totalität, ist die Einheit der *beiden Substanzen* der Wechselwirkung, so dass sie aber nunmehr der Freiheit angehören, indem sie nicht mehr ihre Identität als ein Blindes, das heisst *Innerliches*'; and *WL*, II, 224=SL, 586: 'Das Leben oder die organische Natur ist diese Stufe der Natur, auf welcher der Begriff hervortritt; aber als blinder, sich selbst nicht fassender, d.h. nicht denkender Begriff.'

16 Cf. the quotation with which this essay concludes.

17 Cf. *WL*, II, 246=SL, 606, where Hegel uses the same notion of *übergreifen* which Miller here renders as 'embrace'. Thus, 'Das Allgemeine als der Begriff ist es selbst und sein Gegenteil, was wieder es selbst als seine gesetzte Bestimmtheit ist; es greift über dasselbe über und ist in ihm bei sich.'

Hegel's speculative sentence

Jere Paul Surber

The recent interest in Hegel's conception of language not merely represents an 'external' attempt to apply a dominant contemporary philosophical interest to a historical figure who happens to be in vogue, but is motivated, I believe, by two more fundamental concerns. First, just as the general turn to Hegel, both in America and on the Continent, represents an attempt on the part of contemporary thinkers to discover a more comprehensive framework from which to reintegrate currently departmentalized philosophical issues, so the interest in the role of language in Hegel's thought seems to be motivated by a desire to find the roots of a richer conception of language than that operative in either current linguistic philosophy or phenomenology. Second, the recent resurgence of metaphysics, which is not unrelated to this renewed interest in Hegel, must ultimately face the problem of legitimizing itself in the face of over a half-century of reflection upon language, which has had, as its result, an affirmation of the radically finite character of linguistic expression. As perhaps the first thinker of our tradition to confront directly and positively the question of the possibility of systematic metaphysical reflection expressed through the admittedly finite capacities of natural language, Hegel gains special prominence in this debate.

Unfortunately, however, the works dealing with Hegel's conception of language which have appeared to date tend to allow either one or the other of these concerns to dominate the discussion. On the one hand, such thinkers as Bodammer,¹ Derbolav² and Cook³ have approached this issue with a general concern to assemble Hegel's rather scattered statements about language, trace the development of his thinking about language, and derive from this certain general insights into its nature. On the other hand, Marx⁴ and Simon⁵ have attempted to come to grips with the more general issue of the relation between metaphysical reflection

and language, employing Hegel's own views on language as a starting point for their reflections.

Both of these approaches to Hegel's conception of language are of value to a broader understanding of Hegel's thought, and there is admittedly some degree of overlap between them. However, neither seems to confront the point at which their differing concerns converge, in a way which follows and explicates Hegel's own suggestions concerning the basis of this issue. I have in mind here Hegel's conception of the 'speculative sentence' as he discusses it in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind*.⁶ In the following essay, I will show that Hegel's analysis of the most elementary form of language, the subject–predicate relation, provides the ground for the dialectical mode of unity of Hegel's system and, at the same time, yields Hegel's answer to the question concerning the possibility of an access to an ultimate metaphysical reflection from within the finitude of human language. This can only be accomplished, however, by actually explicating the structure and meaning of Hegel's conception of the 'speculative sentence'.

Because of the centrality of these issues to Hegel's own philosophy, the relationship between the subject–predicate structure of language and the possibility of expressing the truth in the sense in which Hegel conceives it runs like a *Leitmotiv* throughout the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. Hegel repeatedly returns to this theme and for good reason – he must be able, at least in a general way, to make intelligible how the most fundamental structure of language can reveal the movement of the 'negative' within it, and can thereby possess even the possibility of expressing that which Hegel has insisted is the true nature of thought: development, self-unfolding, the 'power of the Negative'. How can the copulative proposition, whose very form seems to be simple identity, bear of itself the dialectical movement of reflection, and reveal, within this structure, thought in its 'true form'? If this cannot in some way be clarified, it would seem to cast doubt on Hegel's most fundamental thesis, and indeed on the possibility of *Wissenschaft* as system altogether. On the other hand, the ability to give a positive response to such a question would provide not only a ground for Hegel's dialectical mode of discourse, but a pre-systematic way of access to the system itself. The final answer to such a question can, of course, only be fully explicated in the context of the *Science of Logic*, but the initial attempt to make some reply to this is crucial because of the very fact that it is made from a 'pre-systematic' standpoint. That is, a way of clarification must be attempted that comes to grips with the issue even before consciousness has been 'raised to the standpoint of Science'. It is, more than anything else, in his discussion of the 'speculative sentence' that Hegel attempts to give an initial degree of cogency to his argument, to give at least a

preliminary theoretical reason why 'natural consciousness' can undertake the 'journey of despair' which is the *Phenomenology*.

Hegel immediately sets himself apart from much of the tradition and a good deal of subsequent reflection upon the same issues when he claims that the primary unit of linguistic meaning is the proposition taken as a whole. Drawing upon his earlier reflections in the Jena writings,⁷ Hegel asserts that, in a proposition such as 'God is the eternal', it is only the whole proposition which can be said to have a meaning.

In a proposition of that kind we begin with the word God. By itself this is a meaningless sound, a mere name; the predicate says afterwards *what* it is, gives it content and meaning: the empty beginning becomes real knowledge only when we thus get to the end of the statement.⁸

And it is clear that it is not simply the particular example chosen of which this is true. Somewhat later Hegel goes on to state in general terms: 'It is in the main the mere name *qua* name which denotes the subject pure and simple, the empty unit without any conceptual character.'⁹ Hegel thus asks, Why do we not dispense with this 'meaningless sound' entirely? Why not, instead, simply say 'the eternal', since on the ordinary understanding of the subject-predicate form, that was what was meant in the first place? Because, Hegel claims, in even the naive understanding of this structure, there is a positive indication: 'But this word just indicates that it is not a being or essence or universal in general that is put forward, but something reflected into self, a subject.'¹⁰ Since, in this context, Hegel suggests that 'subject', taken in abstraction, can also be called 'thought', we can say that the grammatical subject, the name 'waiting' to be further determined, already reveals the mediating activity of thought and reflects the fact that it is not simply the universal which we want directly given, but *the universal as manifested in a concrete manner*. For this reason, we feel the need to maintain the subject despite its seeming 'emptiness' when confronted with its predicate.

Hegel, however, rejects the traditional Aristotelian account of this apparent asymmetry between subject and predicate. For Hegel, to account for the fact that certain words seem to be appropriate only as subjects and others only as predicates by claiming that subjects refer to substances and predicates refer to the attributes of substances fails to come to grips with the problem at its most fundamental level. As long as the copula is seen as indicating a simple affirmation or denial of an accident to a substance, a relation which is, for Hegel, purely 'external', the question still remains as to how or if we can *further* characterize this ontological relationship beyond the sort of identity immediately indicated by the copula. The real form which Hegel's objection against the traditional view of the subject-predicate relation takes is easily overlooked: it is not

so much that the subject–predicate form needs a more complex metaphysical theory undergirding it, as the substance–accident relation would seem to provide, but that the subject–predicate form *of itself* already contains a complexity beyond that which any metaphysical theory could provide as an explanation. That is to say, if we simply attend to the richness concealed in the seemingly simple basic form of language itself, the notion of a ‘theory of predication’ in either metaphysical or formal terms must prove inadequate to what is given to us as developing out of the form of language. We must be clear about the importance of this to an understanding of Hegel: Hegel in no way conceives his thought as the rejection of the traditional notion of what it means to speak intelligibly, in particular, as a rejection of the subject–predicate *form* of language. Rather, his claim is that if we attend to the simplest form of our language, quite apart from any theories we may have about it, its true nature will reveal itself to reflection.

How, then, does Hegel characterize the *Bewegung* implicit in the subject–predicate form? ‘This process, which constitutes what formerly had to be accomplished by proof, is the internal dialectical movement of the proposition itself.’¹¹ In his attempt to characterize the true nature of the subject–predicate form, Hegel initially employs an analogy based upon a semantic peculiarity of language. In German as well as English, the word which we have to denote ‘individual consciousness’ is the same as the word denoting the grammatical unit of which something is said to be predicated, that is ‘subject’. In the traditional view of the subject–predicate form, the grammatical subject is understood solely as indicating, not what the name suggests, but substance, which is then held to ‘support’ accidents or qualities given by the predicate. Again, Hegel urges that we take language seriously: we have come to call this grammatical unit ‘subject’ for a reason which is obscured by the traditional theory of predication.

Important results follow, however, if we take the word itself seriously. If we allow the other meaning of ‘subject’ to shed light upon the subject understood in a grammatical sense, we will realize that activity, *Bewegung*, is included in the very notion of our grammatical distinctions.

Since the concept or notion is the very self of the object, manifesting itself as the development of the object, it is not a quiescent subject, passively supporting accidents: it is a self-determining active concept which takes up its determinations and makes them its own. In the course of this process that inert passive subject really disappears; it enters into the different constituents and pervades the content; instead of remaining in inert antithesis to determinateness of content, it constitutes, in fact, that very specificity, i.e. the content as differentiated along with the process of bringing this about.¹²

Thus, if we are to begin to penetrate the ultimate form of our language, we must, according to Hegel, take seriously the fact that the grammatical subject can reflect what is otherwise also understood by 'subject': consciousness as a process of self-articulation and development. Particularly crucial here is the suggestion that the way in which we understand our language and the way in which we understand our own selves as possessed of consciousness reflect one another. That is to say, our self-understanding and our understanding of our language are co-ordinate. By contrast, we can recall the Aristotelian conception of consciousness: a receptive knowing by virtue of the fact that 'forms' are received by and actualized in the soul. Hegel sees the Aristotelian notion of predication as strictly paralleling this receptivity: predicates are externally and 'passively' received by the grammatical subject, which seems to play no role in the development of the determinations themselves.

Moreover, only if the grammatical subject itself is understood as reflecting the meaning of subject taken as consciousness can we articulate the structure of our own consciousness, that is to say, only thus can anything like a phenomenology be possible. Hegel thus wants to understand the grammatical inflection and the consciousness-implicating inflection of 'subject' as forming a complex unity of meaning.

In his discussion of this problem, he indicates this by moving from speaking of 'subject' in the grammatical sense to the substitution of the conscious subject in the subject-place of the propositional form.

Usually the subject is first set down as the fixed and objective self; from this fixed position the necessary process passes on to the multiplicity of determinations or predicates. Here the knowing ego takes the place of that subject and is the function of knitting or combining the predicates one with another, and is the subject holding them fast.¹³

In this manner, Hegel also indicates his rejection of the Kantian version of the subject-predicate relation. The idea of a 'transcendental subject' synthesizing the pre-given contents of consciousness is, for Hegel, as inadequate an account of the subject-predicate structure as the Aristotelian notion of attaching accidents to a 'passive' substance. In either case, the crucial point is that any adequate account of the basic form of language must reflect the, for Hegel, essentially *active* and *self-developing* nature of consciousness.

If the subject-predicate form contains, within its own structure, a *Bewegung* or dynamic complexity which is concealed by the traditional understanding of this form, Hegel must next be able to articulate it. For this, he employs an example: 'God is Being.' Notice first that this example is deliberately chosen in accordance with the argument which we have been following. The grammatical subject is itself a name for what we

ordinarily understand as a conscious subject. If Hegel goes on to speak of a 'loss of the subject', he will mean equally the loss of the grammatical *and* of the actual subject named by the grammatical subject. Further, the predicate is one generally taken as belonging essentially to the subject named, and is not immediately open to the question of the correctness or truth of the predication itself. Indeed, according to Hegel, this question arises only on the basis of the articulation of the *Bewegung* contained in the proposition, and is not the essential question to be asked, at least initially, about the example.

The 'status' of Hegel's example, however, deserves further elaboration. The example 'God is Being' is immediately open to the objection that it is the 'content' of the sentence, rather than its 'form', which provides the dialectical or speculative element. One could well admit that such notions as 'God' and 'Being' demand a further complex, even dialectical, mode of explication, while denying that this has anything to do with the subject-predicate form in which they appear. What, one might ask, is dialectical or speculative about such sentences as 'The book is on the table', 'John is a bright student' etc.? Further, one might even deny that the subject-predicate form is, in fact, the basic form of intelligible discourse.

I will first deal with the second objection. It is true that Hegel makes this supposition of the primordially of the subject-predicate form, a supposition which has become questionable in our own time. The reason, of course, lies in the fact that Hegel's starting point in such reflections is the Kantian notion of judgment, which itself presupposes the subject-predicate form of expression. It is characteristic of Hegel that his reflections begin with the preceding tradition as it is given, in order to subvert or 'sublate' it from within. Inasmuch as this was a presupposition of the tradition which Hegel addressed, he also should be justified in making such an assumption. Hegel will claim, however, that precisely the traditional understanding of this subject-predicate form of language must be destroyed in order to have access to speculative truth. On the other hand, true to his conception of *Aufhebung*, this 'destruction' not only indicates a 'letting-go' but also a preservation at a higher level of thought.¹⁴ Only thus will it be possible for Hegel's thought to transcend the tradition from which he begins while remaining intelligible to someone approaching his thought from within that tradition.

As to the first objection mentioned above, let me state it in its strongest form. Hegel seems to be claiming in his discussion of the 'speculative sentence' that the subject-predicate *form* itself has a more complex, dialectical structure than it immediately appears to possess. However, he seems to make his point only by employing an example whose *content* is itself obviously internally complex, a fact which still seems to leave unresolved the character of the *form*, taken simply in itself. Though the subsequent analysis will reveal that Hegel's discussion of the 'speculative

sentence' is not dependent upon the example which he gives, this objection is sufficiently important to warrant our suggesting two preliminary responses.

First, Hegel sees in even the most elementary sorts of sentences a 'speculative element'. In the Introduction to the *Enzyklopädie* he writes:

In our ordinary consciousness, thinking is involved and united with sensually and spiritually familiar materials (*Stoffe*), and in thinking, reflecting, and ratiocinating we *mix* feelings, intuitions and representations with thoughts. (In every sentence of entirely sensual content: 'This leaf is green', categories, *Being*, *Individuality*, are already mixed in.)¹⁵

Although we cannot pursue this point in further detail, it is clear that Hegel conceived language, in even its simplest occurrences, as already penetrated through and through by the dialectical universality of thought. If this is the case, then, although an example simpler than 'God is Being' may require a preliminary discussion to reveal the more complex determinations which it implicitly employs, this does not affect its ultimate acceptability as an example but merely makes the work of its analysis more complex.

This is related to a second line of response. In Hegel's example, 'God is Being', the subject term indicates the most universal representational content while the predicate indicates the 'emptiest' and most 'abstract' conceptual determination. If the *Phenomenology* demonstrates the development of all less complex representational contents towards God as the most concrete representational determination, and the *Science of Logic* articulates the development of all more complex thought-determinations out of Being, then Hegel's example seems to be the most universal and comprehensive case of predication, which includes all other possible examples within it as more 'abstract' versions of itself, rather than an unfortunate choice which fails to make his case. In general, then, we can say of the relation of form to content in any example which Hegel might have otherwise chosen that, although certain 'contents' may themselves be more dialectically complex than others, there must be a fundamental dialectical structure involved in the *common form* of their expression, by virtue of which the 'contents' can be seen as dialectically related to one another over and above their own internal complexity. It is this structure of the subject-predicate form which Hegel attempts to articulate in his discussion of the 'speculative sentence'.

To begin the analysis, then, the subject is put forward simply as an empty name, a further undetermined sound, and must be determined by the predicate. Only in the complete proposition is something meant: a name taken simply alone has no meaning, according to Hegel. Once the

determination is added, however, it appears that, if the name was, standing alone, meaningless, then the determination is now the sole locus of the meaning of the proposition. 'The predicate is "Being": it has substantive significance, and thus absorbs the meaning of the subject within it. Being is meant to be here not predicate but the essential nature. Thereby, God seems to cease to be what he was when the proposition was put forward, viz. a fixed subject.'¹⁶ The locus of meaning of the proposition thus initially appears to be the predicate, since the initial response to our example is to say that what is *meant* by it is that 'Being' is the essential nature of God. Already, however, in expanding the meaning of the copula to 'has the essential nature of', we have introduced an assymetry into the predication which does not seem to be strictly warranted by the simple identity suggested by the external form of the proposition. If, for example, the meaning of 'God is Being' can be expressed by a simple identity, then the statement is simply a substitution rule directing us to 'substitute' the word 'Being' at every place at which the word 'God' occurs. The result of this interpretation, however, would be that nothing meaningful was communicated beyond the tautology itself. Just as a name standing alone has no meaning, so too a 'substitution rule' is meaningless – it merely states a 'permissible' symbolic operation. Thus, if such a statement is to have any further meaning, the copula must indicate something more than simple identity, and the first response is to say that the predicate in question expresses the 'essential nature' of the subject.

What, then, can be the meaning of 'essential nature' here? We have claimed that, in the Hegelian view, only sentences, compounds of names or words which stand in relation to one another in the unity of the proposition, have meaning. We can, however, speak of the meanings of words, if we understand that this is possible only by virtue of their *already* standing in relation to other words in propositions. Therefore, we might say that, though the primary sense of 'meaning' indicates the proposition taken as a whole, since only thus do the words receive their 'meaning', we can subsequently speak of the meanings of words in a derivative sense which presupposes a multiplicity of possible propositions into which they can enter and by which they can be explicated. Thus, when we ask for the meaning of 'essential nature', we are actually asking for further propositions by virtue of which its own meaning can be articulated. This is an extension of the Hegelian notion that what is is comprehensible only as dialectically articulated, that is only as an opposition which sublates itself. In our example, when we ask for the meaning of the predicate 'Being' as 'essential nature', we intend this always as *over against* another word, here the subject 'God'. The notion of 'essential nature' thus arises as the first mediation of the opposition of the subject and the predicate in the original sentence. As such, it must not be understood as external to the statement, but as entering into the articulation of the copula itself.

What we mean when we say that 'Being' is to express the 'essential nature' of God could now be put in the form which reveals the increased complexity of the copula. 'God (receives the determination of his essential nature in) Being.'

What is the result of this transformation of the copula? As Hegel phrases it, the result is the 'loss of the subject'. What is indicated by the transformed copula is that the meaning of the predicate in relation to the subject has exhausted the meaning of the subject. That is to say, the meaning of the subject is included in the meaning of the predicate, since the apparent substantiality of the predicate is now claimed to be itself 'the essential reality' and, as such, seems to dispense with the need for a *separate* indicator occupying the subject-place of the proposition. If the meaning of the subject is taken up in its entirety into the predicate, as our new copula claims, then we seem to be able to dispense with the 'empty' subject-word altogether, and the essential meaning should still be present. If this were to occur, however, we would simply be left with another empty word which would itself demand further explication, further propositions by virtue of which it could have a context in which to be meaningful.

Thinking, according to Hegel, is clearly not satisfied with this result. There is a loss involved which goes beyond the fact that the predicate can encompass the meaning of the subject in itself. There is, besides a 'progressive' sense in which one meaning can be said to subsume another, also a 'regressive' sense which demands that the subject be preserved. Although the subject was initially held to be an 'empty sound', it was nevertheless 'fixed' by virtue of its apparent concrete reference. Hegel puts it thus:

Thinking therefore loses that fixed objective basis which it had in the subject just as much as in the predicate it is thrown back on the subject, and therein returns not into itself but into the subject underlying the content.¹⁷

The moment at which the predicate appears to take up within itself the meaning of the subject is likewise the cancelling of the very basis by which both had meaning: the proposition in which they are related. Now we could certainly proceed to take the predicate of our first proposition as the subject of another, the new predicate again as subject of still another, and so on, but this will not resolve the issue. The entire series will still depend upon the original subject which initially provided the fixed point of reference for the original proposition. What is in question is the relation of our original subject to the original predicate, regardless of how further complex in its articulation the predicate itself may be. If the original subject is 'dispensable' and 'lost' in the process, then there

is no reason why the subject would not be 'lost' in every proposition of the series, in which case the net result would still be an 'empty' word with no final proposition within which to function as meaningful.

Thus, Hegel claims that the predicate recoils upon the subject in order to recover the determinateness of reference that was lost in the subsumption of the subject in the predicate. This constitutes the second moment of Hegel's articulation of the 'speculative sentence', and gives rise to a new explication of the copula in the effort to capture what was lost beyond the subsumption of the meaning of the subject in the higher unity of the predicate. We might thus reformulate our sentence to read: 'God (is the ground for predicating) Being.' The predicate returns to the subject because it finds itself seeking the basis for its own meaning as derived from its *opposition* to a subject in a proposition. It was possible to predicate 'Being' at all only because the subject could serve as the concrete point of reference for the predication itself. The emptiness of the collapse of the subject into the predicate is recognized by thought as the loss of the *ground* for the meaning of the predicate, and thus demands that the subject be reinstated as this *ground* of the predication.

Once this point is reached, the full force of what we discovered as a double sense of 'subject' comes into play. When Hegel claimed that the first moment involved the loss of the subject, this must now be taken in the twofold sense *both* that the significance of the grammatical subject is lost, *and* that the consciousness which must perform the *act* of predication in asserting a proposition is likewise lost. As we have seen, for Hegel, the fate of the grammatical subject is tied in a peculiar way to the fate of the subject understood as the locus of conscious activity.

Let us put this point in another way. As has often been observed since the time of Hegel, words of themselves do not refer, any more than do chairs, bicycles or typewriters. Words, however, *can* refer if they are employed by a being capable of speaking a language in the act of communication. Any time, therefore, one speak of a word's 'referring' (even if it be a word like 'God' which has traditionally been connected with difficulties in deciding whether indeed it successfully refers or not), one must at the same time acknowledge the dependence of the *act* of 'referring' upon that which can in fact be said to act, namely, a consciousness. Now, although this point does not seem particularly controversial when stated in this way, the manner in which it is taken up in the concrete analysis of language is of the utmost importance if we attempt to place Hegel's approach to language in relation to both the pre-Hegelian view of language and much of post-Hegelian reflection upon the same issues. For Hegel, the attempt to reflect upon language immediately and necessarily involves us in an effort to reflect upon the nature of consciousness itself. Indeed, the dialectical structure of the proposition as it reveals

itself in Hegel's analysis of the 'speculative sentence' reflects the fact that, for him, consciousness itself is essentially a dialectical activity.

Moreover, the converse of this is, according to Hegel, likewise true: consciousness or, in general, thinking has its true existence only when implicated with language. Later in the *Phenomenology* Hegel writes:

Speech, however, contains this ego in its purity; it alone expresses I, I itself. Its existence in this case is, *qua* existence, a form of objectivity which has in it its true nature.¹⁸

Perhaps an even more emphatic statement of this occurs in a *Zusatz* to the *Philosophy of Spirit*:

Words thus attain an existence animated by thought. This existence is absolutely necessary to our thoughts. We only know our thoughts, only have definite, actual thoughts, when we give them the form of objectivity, of a being distinct from our inwardness, and therefore the shape of externality, and of an externality, too, that at the same time bears the stamp of the highest inwardness. The articulated sound, the *word*, is alone such an inward externality.¹⁹

Thus, for Hegel, only in language does the conscious subject have his existence as conscious.

This general point has particular significance for our discussion of the disappearance of and the recoil upon the subject. With the disappearance of the meaning of the grammatical subject into that of the predicate, the initial place of manifestation of the conscious subject in the act connected with the determinate reference of the grammatical subject is also lost. It is this mutual implication of the conscious subject with the grammatical subject that is fully revealed in the loss itself. That is, the beginning was originally taken to be simply a word occupying the grammatical subject-place of the sentence, but its loss directs us to the fact that the very basis of the predicate being predicate is itself lost: the act of the conscious subject which makes it possible both for the subject to have some determinate reference and for the predicate to have a determinate ground upon which to be predicated.

The recoil of the predicate back upon the subject in its effort to reinstate its own meaning by reinstating its ground now carries this double meaning explicitly within its movement. The ground of the predication proves to be as well the conscious subject as the grammatical subject, as well the active character of consciousness manifesting itself in language as the explicit linguistic determination. If the grammatical subject, and with it the conscious subject, can be said to be lost in the first moment of Hegel's analysis, the activity of consciousness reasserts itself at just

that point at which the subject is consumed in the predicate. The predicate likewise is a word, and, as such, demands a further act of consciousness for the maintenance of its meaning – it too must occur in the totality of a proposition which is asserted. If, however, its force as *predicate* is to be maintained, it is the original subject that must be returned to, but now with its explicit meaning as involving both consciousness and the original grammatical subject. This movement is the return of the predicate into its ground, but ground explicitly understood as already complex within itself. Hegel writes:

The proposition ought to express *what* the truth is: in its essential nature the truth is subject: being so, it is merely the dialectical movement, this self-producing course of activity, maintaining its advance by returning back into itself. This alone is the concrete speculative element, and only the explicit expression of this is a speculative systematic exposition.²⁰

It is in this same connection that Hegel speaks of the 'speculative sentence'. We must now ask how this arises and what it can mean. Hegel seems quite deliberately to choose the word *Satz* here rather than speaking of the speculative *Begriff* or of speculative *Denken*. Indeed, the relationship between the implication of the 'speculative element' with *Sätze* and the notion of *Satz* with which we began is emphasized by Hegel's contrasting the 'speculative sentence' with the sentence of simple identity. It should at once be noted, therefore, that, conceived simply formally, the 'speculative sentence' is no different from the sentence of simple identity: both share the subject–predicate form. The sentence 'God is Being' is just as much a sentence from the speculative point of view as it is from the ordinary view of it as expressing simple identity. Hegel means nothing occult by the notion of the 'speculative sentence'. He is by no means calling for the abolition of the usual way in which we speak *per se*. He does insist, however, that the relationship between the form of our language and thought is more complex than the former providing the structure of discourse and thought providing the 'content' expressed in the particular words employed. Moreover, Hegel is claiming that if we attend simply to the *form* itself, without importing any further theories of predication, the complexity of this relationship will reveal itself. If an extra-ordinary way of speaking philosophically is to arise from Hegel's concept of philosophical reflection, it is not such that it opposes itself to ordinary language, but rather can arise only when we take in its full complexity the ordinary form of language itself.

Thus far I have attempted to explicate the meaning of Hegel's claim that the 'speculative element' appears in the form of a sentence. What, then, does the notion of 'speculative' add to this? In particular, if the

first moment was an attempt to perform a predication, resulting in the loss of the subject, and the second was a return to the subject as the ground of the predication, what, then, is involved in the final moment, the 'speculative'? Before we discuss this, it will be helpful to introduce a characterization of the first two moments in the sense that 'speculative' is a characterization for the third.

We have seen that the first moment involved the subsumption of the meaning of the subject in the greater 'generality' of that of the predicate. We further indicated that, without raising the question of the loss of the subject, we could go on to form further sentences employing our original predicate in the subject-place, the new predicate of these sentences in the subject-places of further sentences etc. In each case, a greater degree of generality will be obtained, and if we reject the notion of an 'infinite progression' of sentences, the final result will be a sentence or sentences containing predicates which express the most comprehensive generalities or genera of what could be said to be. In Aristotelian terms these would be the Categories. Thus, in accordance with what is generally understood by this approach to philosophy, we could call the first moment the 'metaphysical moment'.

When it does become necessary to raise the question of the *ground* of the initial predication itself, however, with the return upon the subject in search of the locus in which all the subsequent determinations must have their 'fixed basis', our reflection becomes redirected. Now the issue is not at all one of generality of universality in terms of inclusiveness, but one of the *ground* of this progression towards greater inclusiveness. The determinateness involved in the capacity of the subject to give a particular is lost in this progression and demands to be reinstated. This reinstatement, however, cannot be accomplished simply by a return upon our grammatical subject; also at stake is the *act* of consciousness by virtue of which the grammatical subject could be said to refer and not simply be an 'entity' alongside others. If the grammatical subject must be posited by an act of consciousness as standing in a certain sort of relation to that which can be determinately referred to, this ultimately raises the question of what can be simply, a question which is involved in any answer to its co-ordinate question of what can be *said* to be in the most fundamental sense. This is obviously what has traditionally been intended by the notion of 'ontology', and for this reason we can call the second moment the 'ontological'. This being the case, we can speak of the 'speculative moment' in a preliminary way as the unity of the 'metaphysical' and 'ontological moments' of the form of the proposition. In what sense is this now to be taken?

In the 'metaphysical moment', the predicate was affirmed at the expense of the subject; in the 'ontological moment', the subject was reaffirmed as the ground not only of the grammatical predicate but also

of the entire predication itself. What, then, is there about this grounding relation that forces the analysis a step further, since it would seem that now both subject and predicate are affirmed in a relation to one another more complex than simple identity? At this point, we must go beyond the limitations of Hegel's explicit discussion in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* for a clue as to how he might continue this exposition. The *Science of Logic* contains several discussions of particular relevance to this question, the discussion of the forms judgment in the section entitled 'Der Begriff' perhaps coming most readily to mind.²¹ The present explanation, however, will follow Hegel's suggestions in the 'Remarks' upon the first moment of the *Science of Logic*, since they seem to be more continuous with the terms of the present discussion.²²

Our question, then, concerns what could be missing from the analysis of the form of the proposition, once the process by which subject and predicate instate themselves has been elucidated. The obvious answer is the *copula*. Thus far, the copula has appeared in our analysis as the plastic element by means of which the propositions, in which the first two moments were reformulated, were articulated. The emphasis has been, first, upon the predicate and then back upon the subject, and the articulation of the copula has been simply a result of these respective foci. Once the two moments have been fully articulated, however, the fact only then emerges that the real locus of the *articulation* of the movements between subject and predicate has been the plasticity of the copula itself. Let us recall:

Metaphysical moment: 'God (receives the determination of his essential nature in) Being.'

Ontological moment: 'God (is the ground for predicating) Being.'

We preferred, initially, these more lengthy articulations of the copula (indicated above by parentheses) because they were more obviously in line with Hegel's own exposition of his example.

We might, however, reduce the complexity of these copulae by reformulating as follows:

Metaphysical moment: S (meaning of included by) P.

Ontological moment: S (ground of) P.

In order to finally state the meaning of the 'speculative sentence', it is evident that these statements must somehow be taken as a unity. At this point, two alternatives present themselves. On the one hand, we might simply combine these two *propositions* additively, and the resulting complex could then be taken to present the meaning of the 'speculative element'. In this manner, the *generative order* of the two propositions,

that is the fact that the second can be stated only after the analysis of the first, can be preserved if we do not uncritically import a notion of commutation into the addition of the two propositions. On the other hand, we might, instead, combine the two *copulae* into a single complex copula occurring in a single proposition, thus yielding 'S (meaning of included by *and* ground of) P', which would also seem to constitute a formulation of the 'speculative sentence'.

Neither formulation, however, fully corresponds to Hegel's own intention. Both ways of stating the unity reveal something about the notion of the 'speculative', but both are equally defective. By means of the first 'additive' formulation, we can express the distinctness of the moments so that the element of *generation* is also expressed. That is, in the first formulation, the two propositions retain their significance as autonomous moments of a *process* of reflection, and can present in their serial statement the fact that one has been generated from the other. The double occurrence of S and P, however, has the disadvantage that their *self-identity* is not revealed in the articulation itself: they are, in both cases, simply variables, and an additional action of thought is required, manifesting itself in a further stipulation that what is substituted for the same variable in the one case must be so substituted in the other. This is 'external' to the propositions themselves, but reveals the more comprehensive role of thought in the case of the first articulation.

The second articulation, i.e. 'S (meaning of included by *and* ground of) P', has the advantage of revealing the self-identity of S and P, since no extra stipulation would be required as there is only one occurrence of S and one of P. However, it has the defect of failing to retain the generative relation of the *propositions* which become united by the more complex copula. Here, thought would reveal itself by *recalling* that the total copula has, in fact, a greater complexity, which we have called generative, than the way in which it is expressed suggests.

Thus, it ultimately appears that there is no way to state the 'speculative sentence' explicitly in a manner which would capture its full dialectical complexity. Put most radically, it would seem that there simply is no 'speculative sentence' which can actually be articulated in ordinary language. This is, in fact, correct, if one assumes that what is in question is a distinct class of sentences which can be called 'speculative', as opposed to others which cannot be so characterized. Hegel's intention here is quite otherwise, I believe. Since he assumes, with the tradition, that the subject-predicate structure is fundamental to any intelligible use of language, the ground for such a distinction could lie only in the *content*. However, as we have seen, it is the subject-predicate *form* itself which Hegel has analysed through a discussion which does not seem to be restricted to any particular content. Since neither the content of the proposition nor the subject-predicate form can serve to differentiate a

'speculative' from a 'non-speculative' sentence, the distinction which the notion of 'speculative' adds to the notion of a sentence must be sought elsewhere.

Considered simply as an *objective linguistic entity* (or, in a somewhat different mode of discourse, a 'sentence-token'), the sentence of simple identity with which we began is no different from the final result of Hegel's analysis: the sentence 'God is Being' can express *both* simple identity and the dialectic of the 'speculative'. However, the manner in which we *consider* and *reflect upon* such a sentence is precisely what is in question for Hegel. *The same sentence becomes speculative by virtue of the very manner in which we comprehend and reflect upon it.* Taken simply in its immediate, objective occurrence, there is no 'external' difference between the 'speculative sentence' and any other 'kind' of sentence. Hegel's crucial point, however, is that language is so related to our reflection upon it that such a purely objective and external view of a sentence is impossible to maintain in the face of the activity of reflection. Any sentence, for Hegel, is a combination of *both* a particularized, external articulation in the medium of language (the occurrence of the 'sentence-token') *and* the universality of thought which is expressed in and constitutes the basis of language itself. Thus, when he speaks of the 'speculative sentence', he refers not to any particular sentence, distinguished on the basis of some special content or extra-ordinary form, but to the comprehended concrete unity of objective articulation and subjective comprehension which lies at the basis of any occurrence of language.

To put this in Hegel's own terms, the relation of thought and language must be conceived as fully dialectical, as *a concrete mode of identity-in-difference*. Since, according to Hegel, thought only achieves objective existence and 'reality' when articulated concretely in language, and language is possible as a medium of expression only because it is infused with the universality of thought, thought and language must be understood as identical in their mutual implication. Because we apprehend another's thought only in his use of language and attribute significance to language only because it expresses thought, we can say that they are identical. For Hegel, what we directly apprehend in understanding language is the immediate objective existence of thought, the immediate identity of thought and language. On the other hand, language and thought must none the less be different and distinguishable, inasmuch as thought can never be totally exhausted in any particular instance of language or linguistic formulation. In particular, any occurrence of language contains, in both the determinations employed as its content and the form in which it is expressed, further possibilities for reflection, according to Hegel's analysis of the 'speculative sentence'.

If we refer back to this analysis, we can see quite clearly the structure of the identity-in-difference of language and thought. Hegel begins his

discussion with a concrete example of a use of language. All we have before us, to begin with, is an 'objective' linguistic entity. Hegel's example, however, immediately negates itself in the face of our reflection upon it, since a necessary element of the sentence as the fundamental 'unit' of meaning is cancelled. Thus, the 'sentence-token' itself calls forth the activity of thought in order to apprehend that which it only partially expresses when taken as indicating a simple identity. The self-identity of the initial example divides itself in the face of reflection into its factic occurrence and the apprehension of it as meaningful. The initial identity of thought and language thus immediately becomes a necessary difference. However, the process of reflection which immediately distinguishes itself from the factic and given linguistic entity *has its own further articulation in language*. That is, it is possible to articulate the internal complexity of the copula in further sentences, in the process of which the original difference of thought and language becomes mediated by further articulations. Once the sentences expressing the 'metaphysical' and 'ontological moments' are stated, however, the activity of reflection is again called forth to unify them. Thought, on its side, can achieve this unity only by a return to the original sentence, though now invested with a further significance for having undergone the dialectical process of explication which it originally evoked. This concrete unity which is constituted upon the return to the origin of the analysis is made possible, on the one hand, because the further reflection which it evokes has itself a linguistic dimension, and, on the other hand, because this further process of articulation must be unified by the activity of thought in its return to the original unity. Thus, we can say that the notion of the 'speculative sentence' is the linguistic corollary of a *dialectically developed understanding of language in its relation to thought*.

In conclusion, I want to indicate the manner in which Hegel's analysis of the 'speculative sentence' allows him to reply to two major questions concerning the possibility of systematic reflection: first, on what basis is even a 'propaedeutic' to *Wissenschaft* accessible in experience; and second, how is a finite articulation of the absoluteness demanded by Hegel's notion of philosophical reflection possible as system? The first question can be answered by virtue of the fact that the very *ability to speak a language and reflect upon it* provides the basis upon which we can start on the 'road to Science'. The most elementary form of speaking and reflecting upon the meanings implicit in language provides the framework for that moment with which the *Phenomenology* begins, the moment of 'Sense-Certainty'. The answer to the second question is suggested by the manner in which the relation of thought and language proves itself to be a concrete unity, a dialectical identity-in-difference. For system as Hegel conceives it to be possible, language must be able to express the true dialectical character of thought. For system to lay

claim to ultimacy, that which finds its expression in language must be distinguishable from any sum of its particular expressions. It is the dialectic which reveals itself in Hegel's analysis of the 'speculative sentence' that provides the basis for the dialectical mode of explication which he employs in the system itself, and it is this latter which constitutes his particular contribution to the enterprise of metaphysical reflection.

Notes

1 Theodor Bodammer, *Hegels Deutung der Sprache, Interpretationen zu Hegels Äußerungen über die Sprache*. Hamburg 1962.

2 Josef Derbolav, Hegel und die Sprache. In: *Sprache – Schlüssel zur Welt*. Festschrift für Leo Weisgerber. Düsseldorf 1959.

3 Daniel Cook, *Language in the Philosophy of Hegel*, The Hague 1973.

4 Werner Marx, *Absolute Reflexion und Sprache*, Frankfurt a. M. 1967.

5 Josef Simon, *Das Problem der Sprache bei Hegel*, Stuttgart 1966.

6 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Trans. by Sir James Baillie. London 1949.

7 For a more detailed discussion of this period of Hegel's thought, see Bodammer, *Hegels Deutung der Sprache*.

8 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 84.

9 *ibid.*, 124.

10 *ibid.*, 84.

11 *ibid.*, 123.

12 *ibid.*, 118–19.

13 *ibid.*, 119–20.

14 For Hegel's own explication of this crucial concept, see: *Hegel's Science of Logic*, Trans. by A. V. Miller. London 1969, 106–8.

15 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Ed. by Nicolai/Pöggeler. Hamburg 1969, 36 (my translation).

16 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 121.

17 *ibid.*, 121.

18 *ibid.*, 530.

19 *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, Trans. by William Wallace. Oxford 1971, 218.

20 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 123.

21 For a detailed discussion of the section of the *Science of Logic*, see Wolfgang Krohn, *Die formale Logik in Hegels 'Wissenschaft der Logik'. Untersuchungen zur Schlußlehre*. München 1972.

22 Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, 83–105.

Hegel's two dialectics

Nancy Sherman

Hegel draws a distinction* between two different levels of dialectic.¹ The first level of dialectic he calls a 'speculative' or 'positive' dialectic; the second, a 'negative' or 'sceptical' dialectic.² The first, or 'positive' dialectic can be characterized as a progressive procedure. In fact, it is a procedure which *ensures* progress. This dialectic exposes incoherencies and divisions in any given stage of knowledge, but then, by a kind of inner necessity, ensures the unification and improvement of such knowledge. In this way, the 'positive' dialectic involves an internal critique of knowledge as well as its further systematization and development. In addition to method, however, the 'positive' dialectic can be seen to embody a speculative (if not theological) metaphysics about the nature of thought and being, in particular about the ultimate immanence of thought and knowledge in objective reality.

The second dialectic, that which Hegel calls a 'negative' dialectic, is fundamentally no more than a truncated form of the 'positive' dialectic. This dialectic exposes incoherencies and divisions in knowledge, but is unable to unify them into a systematic whole. Hegel often speaks of this 'negative' dialectic as the Method of the Understanding (*Verstand*) which exposes the antinomies implicit in certain views without showing how these antinomies might be reconciled by a more adequate explanation. Hegel sees this 'negative' dialectic as pervading the whole of the history of philosophy and, to a large extent, sees his own philosophy as instrumental in exposing it, as well as one of the first to offer a speculative alternative to it.

The plan of this paper will be as follows; I will begin (in section I) by offering a general methodological account of Hegel's speculative or progressive mode of dialectic, and the way in which it might constitute an internal critique of knowledge. I will then propose (in section II) as a model for this 'positive' dialectic Hegel's doctrine of the Concept. This

model will provide the speculative underpinnings of 'positive' dialectic, as well as isolate several of the conflicts which can be seen to arise between the speculative and methodological roles of the dialectic. I will consider possible Hegelian responses to these problems, but will argue that they are ultimately inadequate. As a model for 'negative' dialectic, I will propose (in section III) Hegel's critique of Determinate Being which appears in the first section of the *Logic*. I will discuss methodological and logical problems related to this dialectic, paying particular attention to the Hegelian notion of contradiction. In addition, I will argue that underlying Hegel's criticism of 'negative' dialectic are his speculative assumptions about the unity of thought and reality. I will conclude (in section IV) by raising several objections to these assumptions, and by showing how they run counter to what seems to me to be a more plausible view of dialectic.

I

In Hegel's view, organized knowledge or 'science' (*Wissenschaft*) is a self-critical activity. It progressively transforms itself by reflecting back on its original concepts or presuppositions, by exposing them as contradictory or problematic, and by putting forth reformulations which are more explanatory and have a greater degree of truth (*Wahrheit*). The standard against which knowledge is measured is the Concept itself, which in one of its dialectical 'moments' is externalized and actualized by nature.³ Thus, in a sense, the Concept is turned inside out in order to become its own measuring stick:

consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself . . . 'Concept' and 'object', 'being-for-another' and 'being-in-itself', both fall within that knowledge which we are investigating. Consequently, we do not need to import criteria, or to make use of our own bright ideas and thoughts during the course of the inquiry.⁴

This self-critical activity reveals that a given view of experience is in some way deficient or untrue (*unwahr*), and must be replaced by another self-testable Concept. But it is important to note that if it is the changing Concepts which *themselves* become objectified, then this 'objectification', or 'reality',⁵ against which they are tested must itself be constantly changing.

Now, how does this 'objectification' of the Concept figure in Hegel's critique of knowledge and its standards? On the face of it, Hegel argues that the status of this standard (that is of the Concept externalized as object) rests very much on something like a fallibilist view of knowledge;

the view, that is, that knowledge necessarily involves error, and that it improves only through the exposing and overcoming of those errors. For Hegel, this means that Concepts, when objectified or externalized, fall victim to internal contradictions. Thus, weaknesses that were before only hidden are now through testing laid bare. Through this examination, it is discovered that experienced or tested reality falls short of given aims, and that new explanatory Concepts, which will better grasp reality, must be put forth. But, as was noted above, the examination also reveals forthcoming changes in reality. If there are changes in nature that run parallel to changes in Concepts – i.e. nature actualizes conceptual possibilities – then, curious as it may sound, it is a changing reality which regulates the replacement and improvement of one Concept by another:

Since consciousness thus finds its knowledge does not correspond to its object, the object itself does not stand the test; in other words, the criterion for testing is altered when that for which it was to have been the criterion fails to pass the test; and the testing is not only a testing of what we know, but also a testing of the criterion of what knowing is.⁶

But the notion of changes in reality paralleling conceptual change is a difficult one. On the one hand, it is distinguished from the Popperian (or realistic) view that theory testing allows only for the *discovery* of what already exists in nature; and on the other hand, from the extreme idealistic view in which reality is *directly determined by*, and *deducible from*, thought. From the point of view of 'positive' dialectic as an internal critique of knowledge, Hegel's position can, I suggest, be best appreciated as an historical or retrospective one, but one in which no single retrospection has the final say. Each conceptual expansion is a reintegration of what is disparate at previous stages of reality. Such disparities, though, do not cease to arise, and so no matter how systematic a given synthesis may be, it is nevertheless still open to possible revision. In this way, each new synthesis, or *Aufhebung*, is as much a retrospection of the past as a projection towards the future.⁷ In Hegel's speculative metaphysics, the past and the future seem to be connected by a kind of '*pre-established harmony*', whereby nature *takes up* each new conceptual possibility, and its instantiation becomes the subject for new retrospective reorganizations.

II

The Concept, or *Begriff*, lies at the very core of Hegel's speculative metaphysics. It is the fundamental entity that accounts for the particu-

larity, continuity and development in both the world and our rational experience of it. 'The Concept is the genuine first; and things are what they are through the action of the Concept.'⁸ However, the Concept is an active entity, itself subject to dialectical change, both in its immediate structures and in its more remote links with less developed ontological structures (for example, Being and Essence). Given this dialectical nature, the Concept, Hegel claims, doubles as both the 'one' and the 'many'. It is both universal Concept (*allgemeiner Begriff*) and the specific or particular Concept (*besonderer Begriff*). Furthermore, each of these 'moments' of universality and particularity is self-subsistent. But though self-subsistent determinations, they are not to be thought of as separable from the Concept, or as constituting independent ontological entities. The self-subsistent 'moments' form not a composite, but rather an immanent unity. The universal will contain the particular; the particular will contain the universal. In this way, the concept claims primacy over both of its 'moments', over both an atomistic view of particulars and a 'Platonic' view of a common or shared universal. As will be shown in more detail below, both of these positions are seen by Hegel to be abstract and indeterminate, two sides of the same coin, being equally inadequate, taken either on their own or together:

The universal of the Concept is not a mere sum of features common to several things, confronted by a particular which enjoys an existence of its own. It is, on the contrary, self-particularizing or self-specifying.⁹

Let us examine the dialectic of these two 'moments': the concept specifies itself when it becomes objectified. Yet, as was seen earlier, the objectification of the Concept exposes contradictions. To adapt Hegel's words, the universal Concept, when it appears in externalized form, is incapable of actualizing its potential unity. As a result, the Concept as universal dissolves into separate particulars, unable to realize itself either as a concept fully integrated or as a concept fully articulated in one or other particular *individual*. In an Aristotelian analogue, it is 'matter' that is only potentially particular, and that remains so until actualized by 'form'. However, once 'matter' is organized by 'form', particularity exists, and with it, the particular *individual*. In Hegel's formulation, indeterminate particularity is also mediated in the individual. However, here the mediation is by the *Concept*, through its overcoming of contradictions latent in its 'moment' of particularity. Thus, once the contradictions are reconciled, the Concept arrives at its third 'moment' of Individuality (*Einzelheit*).

The three 'moments' of Universality, Particularity and Individuality together constitute the Hegelian concrete universal. However, the 'moment' of Individuality is most important. The Concept is made con-

crete¹⁰ only when the specific Concept is *mediated* in an individual, when it can be *singled out* and 'understood to be a subject' which 'possesses substantial existence'.¹¹ In places, Hegel redescribes this concrete universal, referring to the universal Concept as genus and the particularized Concept as species. He says the following about the relation between the genus and species:

the genus is unaltered in its species, and the species are not different from the universal but only from one another.¹²

Of the threefold dialectical relation of genus, species and individual, he says:

the individual . . . involves the genus and species in itself.¹³

And, of the nature of the concrete universal, he states:

Life, ego, spirit, absolute Concept, are *not universals*, merely in the sense of higher genera, *but are concretes* whose determinatenesses . . . are genera which, in their reality, are absolutely self-contained and self-fulfilled.¹⁴

In the light of these passages, the relation between the three 'moments' might be interpreted in the following way: the species exists only if there is a genus, but the genus and species exist if and only if there is an individual through which they can be made concrete. That is, the genus is the necessary condition for the species, while some individual or other is the necessary *and* sufficient condition for the genus and species.

Thus, in Hegel's doctrine of the Concept, there seems to be a requirement that the Concept, as genus and species, must be instantiated in some individual. In the following quotation, this requirement of instantiation in the individual is emphasized:

Now, the animal *qua* animal [i.e. as universal] cannot be shown; nothing can be pointed out excepting some special animal. Animal *qua* animal, does not exist . . . *To be animal . . . is the property of the particular animal*, and constitutes its definite essence.¹⁵

This quotation also makes clear an important line of resemblance between aspects of Aristotle's and Hegel's notion of an individual. Like Aristotle's individual which cannot be defined (as can genus and species for Aristotle), so it seems Hegel's individual cannot be grasped through definition but only through pointing.

But does this Aristotelian representation of Hegel's Concept do justice

to its 'Platonic' aspects? Remembering the above account and passages from Hegel, it seems the Hegelian universal can exist just in case it is or has been instantiated; indeed in one of its 'moments' the universal exists in its totality as its instantiation in the individual.¹⁶ A 'Platonic' account of universals, however, allows for the existence of a universal without its having any spatio-temporal instantiation. For a 'Platonic' universal to exist, it is necessary that its instantiation be logically possible, that there could be an instance of the universal, although there needn't be. On this latter view, it makes sense to speak of the existence of such concepts as unicorns, for although there are not and never have been instances of unicorns, it is easy to imagine such instances. In addition, on this 'Platonic' view, we could coherently speak of the existence of, say, some particular sophisticated guided missile system, even though it may never exist as anything more than a design on a drawing board. But we couldn't say that a square circle exists, because in this case, its instantiation would involve a logical contradiction.

This 'Platonic' view surely makes good sense. Not only do we often acknowledge the existence of uninstantiated universals (for example, 'unicorns'), but we even can and do coherently speak of many kinds of intelligibles without any commitment to their being spatio-temporally instantiable. For instance, we happily prove things about the natural numbers without thinking that these can have anything like a spatio-temporal existence. So, it is clear that we have meaningful concepts of which it makes no sense to speak of their spatio-temporal instantiation (for example, 'numbers'); as well as others of which it does make sense, but which (by a kind of historical 'accident') just happen not to be or to have been (spatio-temporally) instantiated.

Now, does Hegel's doctrine of the Concept firmly resist this 'Platonic' line? On the face of it, an affirmative answer seems un-Hegelian. Hegel repeatedly states that the determinate content of thought is to be thought itself, that the 'moments' of the Concept are 'self-subsistent' and 'free totalities' because they exist in the medium of thought, separated from the 'contingencies' and 'fortuitousness' of an isolated time or place.¹⁷ From this standpoint, the Hegelian individual becomes very much like a 'Platonic' intelligible, save for the fact that it has become determinate through an immanent dialectic. Thus, it would appear that two quite distinct views run through Hegel's thinking on the concrete universal. On the one hand, the 'moment' of individuality of the Concept is seen as a particular individual *in thought*, and on the other hand, as a particular individual *in the world*.

We can see Hegel accepting something like the first view in the following passage: 'The individuality . . . posits itself *not as an external difference* but in the difference of the Concept';¹⁸ and in his asking rhetorically: 'Would one ever have thought that philosophy would deny truth to

intelligible entities because they lack the spatial and temporal material of the sensuous world?'¹⁹ However, we can also see Hegel accepting something more like the second view in these quotations: 'The individual is a qualitative *one* or a *this*';²⁰ 'the *this* is posited immediacy pointed out by someone external to it';²¹ and 'individuality becomes external to itself and enters into actuality'.²²

Given these two views, is there perhaps a way of reconciling them? That is, is there a way to allow Hegel's concrete universal to fulfil the requirement of (spatio-temporal) instantiation, without, at the same time, eliminating unactualized conceptual possibilities? In the earlier discussion on the critical method of dialectic, I stressed the progressive yet historical character of the dialectic. Now again, we must return to that idea of cumulative development in order to effect a reconciliation.

Recall that the Concept has as its three 'moments' Universality, Specificity (or Particularity) and Individuality. The universal, as the first 'moment' of the Concept, is an abstract universal; it is the apparent commonness which joins together different particulars and in virtue of which they can be called the 'same'. Hegel says:

The Concept is generally associated in our minds with abstract generality, and on that account is often described as a general conception. We speak, accordingly, of the concepts of colour, plant, animal &c. They are supposed to be arrived at by neglecting the particular features which distinguish the different colours, plants, and animals from each other, and by retaining those common to all.²³

Thus, Hegel's abstract universal is essentially reached by taking the properties of a set of separate and distinct particulars, and forming, in a set-theoretical sense, their intersection. However, these universals cannot, for Hegel, unify or reconcile the differences existing among these specific particulars. Such a universal, which is, for Hegel, the composite of exclusive parts, is itself divided; it is circumscribed by its components, and so is incapable of rational expansion or growth. What the Concept reveals at this stage is fundamentally only a 'negative' dialectic, a dialectic which exhibits its presuppositions and divisions but cannot progressively shift those presuppositions, and as a result, reconcile its distinct aspects.

Individuality will constitute the resolution or positive 'moment' of *aufheben*. The abstract universal is divided and contradictory; it requires reunification. It will be reconciled by a single, individual Concept, but one which is at first only a 'thought determination', an uninstantiated possibility – in more Hegelian terms, a Concept which is not in externalized form. This new Concept is continuous with its past history, but now creatively reorganizes and expands its historical experience. Thus, at this point, we *do* have conceptual possibilities. The Concepts are 'free',

'creative powers' (*schöpferische Macht*), yet strongly rooted in objective experience.²⁴ Such conceptual possibilities, though, are different from logical possibilities. The difference is not simply the obvious one that Hegel's Concepts *require* that there be contradictions, while a logical possibility *forbids* them. There is a more fundamental difference which underlies this surface difference, and that is that Hegel's Concepts are the *product* of testing, or 'externalization'; the abstract universal and its specifications are the basic structure of what was described earlier as a concept and its objectification. What results is not just a concept which it is possible to *imagine*, but a concept which is closely linked to experience. We might sum up this stage of the Concept's dialectic by saying: 'What is actual is *made* reasonable.'²⁵ Thus, Hegel says:

The actuality of the rational stands opposed by the popular fancy that Ideas and ideals are nothing but chimeras, and philosophy a mere system of such phantasms. It is also opposed by the very different fancy that Ideas and ideals are something far too excellent to have actuality.²⁶

Admittedly, though, in Hegel's scheme this unactualized conceptual possibility is short-lived. The Concept will itself be actualized by a subsequent change in nature, and so to adapt Hegel again, 'What is reasonable soon becomes what is actual.' But this actualization or externalization of the Concept is already the beginning of a new dialectical sequence. The new externalized Concept soon becomes one among many exclusive, specific particulars which presuppose a common abstract universal and which point towards another single, individual Concept that will reunify them.

Thus, we can effect *some* sort of reconciliation between Hegel's two, seemingly opposed, interpretations of the particular or determinate individual as an individual in thought (or concept) and an individual in the world. And we can even do this in such a way as to maintain the existence of unactualized conceptual possibilities. But we cannot, it seems, do it in such a way as to maintain these possibilities as unactualized for long; for by a kind of 'dialectical necessity' the unified concept (or individual in thought) becomes instantiated in an individual *de re* – the 'rational becomes actual'.²⁷

It is important to be clear about what is going on here: remember that for Hegel the 'positive' dialectic is necessarily an improvement, a superseding of its earlier, contradictory 'moments'. Now, how *could* it be necessary that an *Aufhebung* be an improvement unless what emerges somehow 'determines' what is or exists objectively in the world? In other words, Hegel is forced to assume some sort of 'Instantiation Requirement' in order to ensure that the *Aufhebung* will be an improvement. If he gives up this requirement, then Hegel is on the horns of a dilemma: *either*

thought improves qua thought, but without entailing that it improves as a characterization of the world, or thought *does* improve as a characterization of the world, only this improvement is not necessary but only fortuitous.

In fact, either horn of this Hegelian dilemma may turn out to be a more reasonable position to adopt than is Hegel's own way out of the dilemma. Taking the first horn, it is difficult to understand what could be meant by thought improving qua thought. But it seems to me that it is *only* with respect to 'pure' *intelligibles* that this view could make much sense. We can perhaps see this more clearly if we consider the following example:²⁸ take, as given, the natural numbers and the operations of addition and subtraction. We have to start with, then, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . and '+', '-'. Now let $a = 5$, and $b = 7$. Using the given, we can formulate the question, 'What is $a+b$?' and answer it, in terms of the given, as '12'. However, if we again take the given and now formulate the question, 'What is $a-b$?', we find this time that we are unable to answer the question in terms of the given, (i.e. the natural numbers). In order to be able to answer the question, 'What is $5-7$?', we must have available the negative numbers, and this means *extending* our given knowledge to include them. From this example, then, we can see how it might be possible to formulate a question which *virtually forces* us to extend our given knowledge in a certain, natural, way. One could almost say (although it seems a bit curious) that it is the given which *forces itself* to burst beyond its own boundaries. In this way, then, thought improves qua thought by an inner dialectic. But these are cases where we are talking not about the world, but about 'pure' intelligibles.

The second horn of the dilemma is such that it *does* make sense to speak of thought improving qua characterization of the world, yet only in so far as the improvement is not necessary, but only fortuitous. This is Popper's view.²⁹ For Popper, what emerges from a given problem situation is *not necessarily* an acceptable solution of the problem. For it might be the case that an *ad hoc* solution to a conflict between two theories is no better than the original problem, and may, in fact, even be worse. Thus, on Popper's view, progress is neither a genetic nor linear process, since not all solutions which arise out of problem situations *are* improvements. On Hegel's view, however, progress does seem to be both genetic and linear. Something is an improvement (or *Aufhebung*) by the very fact that it arises or comes out of the conflict of its two prior 'moments'. And this *Aufhebung*, or solution to a problem, necessarily closes up that problem as formulated.

Thus, Hegel's view of necessary progress tries to avoid both of the above positions, the one, where thought is siphoned off from reality, and where it makes sense to speak of thought improving qua thought; and the other, where thought interacts with reality, but where such interaction

(or dialectic) is not always, but only sometimes, progressive. The first view would be seen by Hegel as inadequate, because it involves 'transcendent' experience. The second view would also be seen as inadequate, for although it posits an interaction between thought and reality, that interaction does not *ensure* progress; it does not, in Hegel's terms, ensure a 'positive' dialectic. But although these two views would be seen by Hegel as inadequate and incompatible (as two horns of a dilemma which his position is somehow to avoid), they are, in fact, not at all incompatible. If Hegel were to relinquish his claim of *necessary* progress, the choice he would face would not be an exclusive either/or between a dialectic of thought qua thought and a dialectic of thought qua characterization of reality. Any position in which it makes sense to speak of the immanent dialectic of intelligibles (say, one which might account for the growth of our mathematical knowledge, as suggested in the example above) is *perfectly compatible* with a theory which accounts for the fallible growth of our empirical knowledge (say, something like Popper's view also suggested above). These positions are seen as incompatible only from the point of view which seeks to make *all thought instantiable or immanent in reality*. And Hegel seems to be taking just such a point of view. According to his doctrine of the Concept, all concepts (to be more exact, all determinate individuals) can be conceived of in thought *only if* they have been, are or will be actualized as existing in nature. His position suggests that there must always be a necessary connection between the individual existing in thought and the individual existing in the world. But if this be the case, then his position has at least two serious flaws, since it entails that there can be no pure intelligibles (since all genuine concepts must have their spatio-temporal instantiation), and what is even more disturbing, that concepts must in some way 'determine' or 'create' (perhaps by a kind of 'pre-established harmony') what is or exists in nature. And this might be seen as challenging the very possibility of 'mistakes' which must be the motor for any coherent notion of the dialectic.

III

Thus far, then, I have considered Hegel's 'positive' or progressive dialectic. In section I, I have a fairly general account of its methodological aspects, suggesting a kind of balance between the dialectic as testable and progressive, and the dialectic as historical and progressive. In section II, I considered Hegel's Concept (*Begriff*) as an ontological model of this progressive dialectic. Several problems arose which brought into question this 'positive' dialectic. On the one hand, progress seemed necessary, and as a result, reality had to be seen as, in some way or other, 'determined'

by the dialectic itself. This brought into question the whole notion of a 'mistake' upon which dialectic must rest. On the other hand, the ontological structure of the Concept seemed such as to place unduly severe boundaries on the kind of entities Hegel could ultimately account for in his speculative scheme. That is, only intelligibles like mathematical objects seemed plausible candidates for his 'positive' dialectic, given his characterization of this dialectic as necessarily progressive; yet just these were ruled out, for the 'positive' dialectic also requires that all thought be instantiable or immanent in reality.

In this section, my intention is to turn to Hegel's characterization of the 'negative' or non-progressive dialectic. My main source will be the discussion that appears in the section on Being in the *Logic*, and in particular, the discussion of Determinate Being.³⁰ Here, Hegel presents a critical reconstruction of one of Spinoza's views, his hope being to show the inadequacy of the 'negative' dialectic which it implicitly employs. In what follows, I will discuss the 'negative' dialectic primarily in terms of the Hegelian notion of contradiction. In concluding, I will indicate how the 'negative' dialectic, like the 'positive' dialectic, makes sense only within the framework of Hegel's speculative metaphysics.

To set the scene, we can say that the backdrop against which Hegel discusses the doctrine of Determinate Being is his own speculative picture of thought as both necessarily historical and progressive. Or, considering the so-called 'Aristotelian' view that 'there is nothing in thought which has not been in sense and experience', Hegel adds that speculative philosophy must acknowledge the converse as well, that 'there is nothing in sense and experience which has not been in thought'.³¹

In one of the early passages of the *Logic*, Hegel characterizes Being as definite and determinate (*Dasein*). The principle by which Being becomes definite is the Spinozistic principle of determinate negation, according to which negation is 'the foundation of all determinateness', '*omnis determinatio est negatio*'.³² In Hegel's terms, this principle states that what a thing is (i.e. its quality or mode) is determined by what it is not, that 'a thing is what it is, only in and by virtue of its *limit*'.³³ Thus, that a thing has a particular character or mode presupposes that other things have contrary characters or modes which it lacks. To take a simple example, a thing is red all over only if there are non-red qualities – blue, yellow, green etc. – which it lacks. And considering the *concept* corresponding to these negatively determined things, such concepts might be thought of as negations which have 'content', since it is the negative or contrary of each concept that gives positive meaning or 'content' to it.

Concepts that are negatively determined might be thought of as very similar to polar concepts. Basically, polar concepts are pairs of concepts each of which can be defined exclusively in terms of the negation of the other. Thus, consider the pair 'counterfeit/genuine': the extension of each

of these can be thought of as comprising the 'contrast class' of the other. Similarly, and more obviously, pairs like 'veridical/non-veridical' are polar pairs, only here one of the concepts might be thought of as essentially negative (in Austin's terminology, the positive one clearly 'wears the trousers'). We may say that the first type of polar concepts are positive/positive ones, while the second type are positive/negative ones. Hegel's negatively determined concepts basically turn out to be positive/positive polar concepts. Thus we have Hegelian determinate negations such as 'cause/effect', 'identity/difference', 'substance/accident' and 'whole/part'. As Ryle puts it, 'each of the pair takes in the other's washing'.

The principle of determinate negation is vital both to Hegel's progressive and non-progressive dialectic in that it acts as a springboard for the generation of contradictions. In terms of the discussion of negatively determined Being, Hegel says that it is Determinate Being that falls into 'contradictoriness; or 'alterability'.³⁴ On the face of it, however, it is difficult to understand how Being which is itself determinate (even if negatively so) could at the same time be indeterminate, in the sense of 'alterable', 'changing' and 'contradictory'. In what follows, I will try to explain the way in which such contradictoriness (and hence, for Hegel, contradictions) might arise.

Concepts which are negatively determined might be thought of as presupposing a well-defined domain, in which the negatively determined concepts within that domain are exhaustive and exclusive (similar to polar concepts). On this view, the principle of determinate negation is not unlike the Law of Excluded Middle. The Law of Excluded Middle holds for some predicate 'F', if in a well-defined domain of objects any object is either F or not-F. Thus, if we take the natural numbers as a well-defined domain, and take 'F' to be the predicate 'even', then all objects in that domain will be either even or not-even (i.e. odd). But say that the domain is extended, so that it now includes, in addition to the natural numbers, horses. In this event, it would now not make much sense to say that the Law of Excluded Middle holds for the predicate 'even'. For to say that a horse is either even or not-even is to commit a kind of 'category mistake'. The principle of determinate negation requires a well-defined domain in much the same way. One concept is negatively determined by another only if they can be grouped together as applying to objects of the same type.

But, as was suggested a moment ago, the central problem to be dealt with is not negative determination *per se*, but the 'contradictoriness' that Hegel claims results from such determinations. Thus, we must make sense of some of Hegel's rather perplexing claims: 'If we take a closer look at what a *limit* implies, we see it involving a contradiction in itself, and thus evincing its own dialectical nature';³⁵ and what seems even more

bewildering, 'Instead of speaking by the maxim of Excluded Middle . . . we should rather say: Everything is opposite.'³⁶

A possible explanation for the emergence of such 'contradiction' might be as follows: assume a well-defined domain of objects, which we will again take to be the natural numbers. Assume also that in this domain there are examples of both even and odd numbers. Schematically, if we let x range over the natural numbers and $F =$ 'even', then we can say that $((\exists x)Fx \ \& \ (\exists x)\neg Fx)$. Now this statement is in no way contradictory. It makes the perfectly consistent claim that there are some natural numbers which are even, and other natural numbers which are not. In contrast, however, it seems that Hegel would want to conclude from the fact that there are examples of both even and uneven numbers to the fact that *some kind of contradiction* must *necessarily* exist in the given domain. For the moment, let us think of this contradiction in the ordinary sense, as the inconsistent statement $(p \ \& \ \neg p)$. Given this view of contradiction, it seems that Hegel is guilty of making a rather naive mistake. He seems to have inferred invalidly, from the fact that there are examples of both even and uneven numbers, the fact that any given number is *itself* both even and uneven. To formulate the point schematically, he has invalidly moved from the non-contradictory statement $((\exists x)Fx \ \& \ (\exists x)\neg Fx)$ to the contradictory one $((\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ \neg Fx))$.³⁷

This criticism of Hegel is in some ways instructive, since it shows that Hegel's notion of contradiction cannot sensibly be interpreted in the ordinary way (as statements of the form $(p \ \& \ \neg p)$). One can only conclude that the criticism thus fails to come to grips with what is most crucial at this point – that is explaining just what *kind* of contradiction emerges from a determinate negation. In Hegel's scheme, it seems that what is fundamentally contradictory is not a single object being an instance of contradictory universals (say, a natural number which is both even and not even), but rather the whole domain which contains these objects; or in Hegel's own terminology the abstract universal which is common to a given set of instances. This abstract universal seems to be contradictory for Hegel in the very fact that it can be *separated* into different and distinct instances; it is contradictory, that is, in so far as it is not a unified whole but only a collection *divisible* into parts. Thus, the concept of the natural numbers, thought of as an Hegelian abstract universal, turns out to be, curiously enough, a contradictory concept. For it can be divided into different and distinct parts: into even natural numbers, on the one hand, and non-even ones, on the other.

Contradiction, in this wide sense, is indeed a very weak notion. That a concept is contradictory comes to mean little more than that, in some way or other, it can be thought of as having different aspects, or divisions. Could such a weak notion of contradiction (as differences) really be what Hegel has in mind when he claims that 'contradictoriness' emerges from

negative determinations? Recall that the emergence of contradictions presupposes a well-defined domain. In more Hegelian terms, contradictions can arise only when a concept is considered from a reasonably stable perspective, from what Hegel might call a relatively 'fixed' point of view or level of experience. Now, let us consider just these conditions of 'fixed' point of view etc. as giving the background for the emergence of contradictions. Interestingly enough, we can say that precisely the same conditions form the background to the emergence of differences. Differences (like similarities) must always be with respect to a certain *point of view*; it makes sense to speak of the differences among things only when we are prepared to specify the *relevant ways* in which those things are to be considered. Thus, if we are to make sense of Hegel's notion of contradiction, we must see it as operating in much the same way as our incomplete expression, 'x is different from y', where the respect in which they differ is to be filled in.

Now, under what circumstances are such contradictions (understood as differences with respect to some given point of view) taken by Hegel to result in merely a 'negative', non-progressive dialectic? In the discussion of Determinate Being, Hegel suggests that the 'negative' dialectic involves not just the *emergence* of contradiction, but also its *persistence*. Indeed, it seems that it is in the persistence of the same contradiction, in 'its endless iteration' *ad infinitum*, that the dialectic becomes 'negative' or non-progressive.³⁸ Now the contradiction can persist only so long as the point of view from which it is a contradiction remains unchanged, or in Hegel's terms, is not reflected upon critically. In other words, the persistence of contradiction correlates directly with the persistence of a particular point of view. If the point of view is not changed, the contradiction which emerges from it cannot be reconciled. Thus, the 'contradictoriness' or 'alterability' of Determinate Being simply amounts to its being restricted to a fixed domain in which the same contradictions are repeated without any possibility of new conceptual direction or growth. This 'negative' dialectic is thus non-progressive, since its movement involves only a kind of change or alternation between 'fixed' differences. This 'negative' dialectic of determinate negation can therefore be thought of as corresponding to the 'moments' of abstract universal and species of the Concept, with the all-important difference that the speculative and progressive *Aufhebung* cannot here be achieved. In terms of Hegel's underlying metaphysics, the 'negative' dialectic lacks the reconciling 'moment' of the individual – the 'moment', that is, wherein differences are unified and where, through an immanent dialectic with nature, progress is guaranteed.

IV

In this final section, I shall begin by summarizing Hegel's view of speculative progress, the view which is presupposed by both his 'positive' and 'negative' dialectics. My aim, however, will be to indicate an alternative view which makes progress both *non-speculative* and *non-necessary*. Thus, remembering what has been said in the above sections, let us reconstruct Hegel's view of progress. We have suggested above that in the first phase of Hegel's model of progress the *background knowledge*, against which contradictions emerge, is well defined and can be formulated rather narrowly by a single perspective or Concept. Given this, we can say further that the second phase of *contradiction* suggests that against the background of each concept only *one* set of 'fixed' differences (that is contradiction or problem) is likely to arise. And finally (recalling what was said in section II) the third phase, that of *reconciliation*, suggests that *any* reconciliation of the contradiction (or solution of the problem) necessarily constitutes an improvement. Taking this three-phased model as representing a completed sequence of Hegel's 'positive' dialectic, I shall try to show why, as a view of progress, it ultimately fails.

To begin with, this Hegelian linear model of progress just does not seem to characterize the growth of knowledge adequately. To take the first phase first: in empirical science, for example, the background knowledge against which problems or contradictions emerge is usually not formulated in terms of a narrow perspective or restrictive concept. Instead, such background knowledge is more often than not some sort of *system of statements*, whether it be an axiomatic system, as Duhem would maintain, or a loose network of statements and assumptions, as Quine would hold.

Taking the second phase of contradiction, it seems quite unreasonable to maintain, as Hegel does throughout his philosophy, that at each level of knowledge (a) only one contradiction or problem can arise, and moreover (b) that this one problem that does arise is unfailingly worth solving. Taking (a), if we assume that the background knowledge consists of a system of statements, then there will be many possible ways in which this system might be contradicted, and so many possible problems can arise. Thus, in so far as the background to the emergence of contradiction consists of a system of statements, it follows that a much more varied and multifarious 'problem-situation' may arise than is suggested by Hegel's more linear model. And taking (b), if we assume that many problems do arise against such a background, then it seems reasonable to believe that not all of these problems will be equally important to solve, that some will be more fruitful than others. We will thus be confronted with a kind of competition of problems, and hence be faced with the 'meta-problem' of deciding which problems should be placed at

the top of the agenda. This fact again makes Hegel's more linear model look rather too simplistic and determinate.

Lastly, taking the third phase of reconciliation, we have argued (in section II) that Hegel's characterization of the 'positive' dialectic involves the notion of necessary progress, the notion that *any* resolution of the conflict engendered by the first two 'moments' of the dialectic constitutes progress. Now, if at any stage of knowledge only one contradiction or problem can arise, and if any problem which arises is taken up as worthy of solution, and if all such solutions constitute improvements, then Hegel's 'positive' dialectic must basically be a genetic account of progress. For, if he assumes that all solutions are progressive, then he must also assume that the process of solving carries with it a justification of the solution. In other words, a solution is justified by the very fact that it is a solution, and its being a solution depends upon its genesis, upon the fact that it arose as a response to contradiction. One could say that such a view commits the 'genetic fallacy', since it fails to distinguish at all between the 'context of discovery' and the 'context of justification'. Hence, the question 'Does something constitute a piece of knowledge or an improvement in knowledge?' can, for Hegel, be answered via an answer to the *genetic* question 'How did this something come about?'

Finally, and ironically, although Hegel's system emphasizes the critical or dialectical nature of thought, his 'positive' dialectic of progress seems to rule out the possibility of a genuinely dialectical method of trial-and-error. For if all trials are guaranteed to be successful, then what becomes of the notions of 'mistake' or 'error'? On the other hand, if mistakes or errors do occur, then given the necessity of successful trials, such error can only arise as a result of a subsequent change in Reality. But *how* and *what* could we learn from such mistakes if they are the result of our facing a changing Reality? Basically, it would seem that all that could be learned is that Reality has, in fact, changed. We could learn nothing more than this. But this means that *all* of our mistakes always remain at the same level, we always make the *same* mistake, and our mistakes do not get 'better and better'. The strict Hegelian will argue that we do learn from our mistakes, since each mistake in Hegel's hierarchy is less simple-minded and immediate than the one before. But if each mistake teaches us only that Reality has changed, then it is difficult to understand in what way, and by what *criteria*, the mistakes could be progressively ordered. Unless we presuppose something like a fixed Reality, how can we talk about our mistakes getting 'better and better', or our knowledge becoming more 'complete'? If, however, we presuppose a *changing* Reality (as Hegel does), then the only sense that could be given to the notion of our mistakes improving or of our knowledge becoming more complete, is if Reality *itself* is improving or becoming more and more rational. But then Hegel's 'positive' dialectic can only be seen as a method

of trial-and-error by which our knowledge improves under the rather theological assumption that Reality is progressive. And it is at this point that Hegel's dialectical method comes to depend totally upon his theological and teleological metaphysics.³⁹

Notes

* I shall adopt the following conventions throughout this paper: *Encyclopaedia* = *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, from which I shall be primarily drawing upon the smaller or lesser Logic which comprises the first part of the *Encyclopaedia*. I am using the Wallace translation of the second edition, Oxford University Press. *Logic* = *The Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller, London & New York, 1969. *Phenomenology* = *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977. The German page references to these two works follow *Logik* II (= *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Vol. II). and *Phänomenologie* (= *Phänomenologie des Geistes*). I am using G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970. Also, throughout the paper I shall use the term 'Concept' rather than 'Notion' in translating Hegel's term *Begriff*.

1 It might be objected at the start that there are not two dialectics to be found in Hegel, but three, operating not only at the levels of conceptual thought and objective reality, but also at the level of intelligibles. In section II, however, I shall argue against the plausibility of attributing to Hegel this third level of dialectic, on the grounds that if, as Hegel maintains, all thought must be instantiable or immanent in reality, then 'pure' intelligibles cannot exist, and so there cannot be a separate dialectic of them.

2 It should be noted that my order of presentation of these two dialectics is the reverse order of their appearance on Hegel's writings (see *Encyclopaedia* § 38). I have reversed the order for heuristic purposes only. Of the speculative or 'positive' stage of dialectic, Hegel says: 'The speculative stage, or stage of Positive Reason, apprehends the unity of terms . . . in their opposition, – the affirmative which is involved in their disintegration and their transition' (*Encyclopaedia* § 82, my italics). It is clearly this type of dialectic which Hegel wishes to show to be at the core of science (*Wissenschaft*) (see *Encyclopaedia* § 81). Of the 'negative' dialectic, Hegel says: 'When the Dialectical principle is employed by the understanding separately and independently, – especially as seen in its application to philosophical theories, Dialectic becomes scepticism; in which the result that ensues from its action is presented as a mere negation . . . Often, indeed, Dialectic is nothing more than a subjective see-saw of arguments pro and con' (*Encyclopaedia* § 81; my italics).

3 The externalization of the Concept is most explicitly dealt with in the second book of the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Philosophy of Nature*. There, the Concept or Idea does not exist in an ideational level at all, but instead, exists in the realm of nature, at the level of both natural laws and instantiated particulars. Hegel claims that the Concept (or Idea) moves from its existence in thought to its existence in the world by alienating itself, and by allowing its externalized 'other' to be taken up freely by nature. Thus, Hegel introduces the *Philosophy of Nature* in the following way: 'Enjoying however an absolute liberty, the Idea does not merely pass over into Life, or as finite cognition allow Life to show in it: in its

own absolute truth it resolves to let the "moment" of its particularity . . . go forth freely as Nature' (*Encyclopaedia* § 244).

4 Introduction to *Phenomenology*, pp. 53–4. *Phänomenologie*, pp. 76–7.

5 It is crucial to recognize that the notions 'reality', 'objectification' and 'nature' take on very special meanings for Hegel. Just how these terms are used by Hegel will become clearer as we proceed. For the moment, however, some illumination can be shed from the quotation cited in the text, in particular from the passage, "'being-for-another" and "being-in-itself", both fall within both the knowledge which we are investigating'. The gist of Hegel's remarks can be taken to be that Concept and object, or equally, thought and reality, are not two separate entities, but rather two 'moments' or aspects of one and the same speculative Being. As such, changes in Concept involve reciprocal changes in the Concept's self-externalized 'other', or object.

6 Introduction to *Phenomenology*, pp. 54–5. *Phänomenologie*, p. 78.

7 A clue to the nature of this historical, yet progressive, dialectic is contained in Hegel's technical use of the term *aufheben*. *Aufheben*, often translated by the Latinized term 'sublate' has in German a tripartite meaning. It means: (1) to negate, cancel or eliminate, (2) to supersede or raise up and (3) to preserve. A Concept which 'supersedes' another is one which reveals a deep-lying unity, a depth which the other could not grasp. This new Concept 'negates' or contradicts the superseded Concept. However, the new Concept also preserves the scope and content of the former Concept. Progress (or an *Aufhebung*) is possible if, and only if, there is not only an elimination of contradiction, but also the *conservation* of previous knowledge.

8 *Encyclopaedia* § 163.

9 *ibid.*, The dialectic between the universal and particular aspects of the Concept is discussed by Hegel at *Encyclopaedia* § 194.

10 For a discussion of the Hegelian sense of the term 'concrete', see George L. Kline's 'Some Recent Reinterpretations of Hegel's Philosophy', *The Monist*, Vol. 48, No. 1, January 1964, pp. 34–75; see especially pp. 40–1.

11 *Encyclopaedia* § 164.

12 *Logic*, p. 606. *Logik* II, p. 280.

13 *Encyclopaedia* § 164; my italics.

14 *Logic*, p. 605; my italics. *Logik* II, p. 279.

15 *Encyclopaedia* § 24; my italics.

16 Hegel says, 'the individual or subject is the Concept expressly put as a totality' (*Encyclopaedia* § 163; my italics).

17 See *Logic*, pp. 577–95 (*Logik* II, pp. 245–69), and especially pp. 590–1 (p. 262).

18 *Logic*, p. 622; my italics. *Logik* II, p. 301.

19 *Logic*, p. 590. *Logik*, II, p. 262.

20 *Logic*, p. 621. *Logik*, II, p. 300.

21 *Logic*, p. 622. *Logik*, II, p. 300.

22 *Logic*, p. 621. *Logik*, II, p. 299.

23 *Encyclopaedia* § 163.

24 *Logic*, p. 605. *Logik*, II, p. 279.

25 *Encyclopaedia* § 6.

26 *ibid.*

27 It might be objected here that Hegelian dialectic does not involve, as I have been maintaining, one-to-one changes between thought and reality. Instead, it might be argued, the harmony between thought and being is manifested only at the end of the complete dialectical series, either through the more sweeping

backward glances of *history*, or through the speculative or idealistic *revelations* that thought and reality reflect the same series of intelligibles. I, however, find both of these views unsatisfactory. On the one hand, a theory which views the unity between thought and reality as primarily a matter of historical thinking would appear to undermine the role of predictive or *ante hoc* rationality drastically. In fact, the extreme historical view would make inconsequential any notion of acting in the light of certain articulated aims and standards which, it is hoped, will bring us closer to the truth. (For a criticism of 'historicist' epistemology along similar lines, see Larry Briskman, 'Toulmin's Evolutionary Epistemology', *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, April 1974, pp. 160-9.) On the other hand, if we explain the implicit unity of thought and reality through speculative revelations which occur only at the final stages of dialectic, as Findlay has suggested, then the means by which that unity is actualized is made a mystery. That is, we will be left without any systematic explanation of just how that unification was achieved. Thus, it seems to me that if we are to make sense of Hegel's philosophy as a systematic unfolding of the unity between thought and being, we can do so only by viewing *each* dialectical sequence as involving parallel changes in thought and reality.

28 I owe this example to Howard Friedmann and Larry Briskman.

29 See Karl Popper, 'Epistemology Without a Knowing Subject' and 'Of Clocks and Clouds', in *Objective Knowledge* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972).

30 See *Encyclopaedia* §§ 89-95.

31 *Encyclopaedia* § 8.

32 *Encyclopaedia* § 91.

33 *Encyclopaedia* § 92; my italics.

34 *ibid.*

35 *ibid.*

36 *Encyclopaedia* § 119.

37 I am grateful to Larry Briskman for this point and for help in expressing the example.

38 *Encyclopaedia* § 94.

39 I would like to thank J. N. Findlay, George L. Kline, Leon Pompa, W. H. Walsh and Frederick Weiss for their interest and criticisms. Also, I am very grateful to Andrew Buckwalter for his assistance with the German text. But above all, I am indebted to Larry Briskman for his many comments, suggestions, and sustained interest during the writing of this paper in Edinburgh, 1974-5.

The relation of thought and being: some lessons from Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*

John E. Smith

It may seem quite futile to ask the modern logician who is firmly wedded to the ideal of a purely formal, symbolic logic to be concerned with the metaphysical problems raised by the relation between thought and reality. And I suppose it should be added that if it is futile to expect such concern, it must be futility raised to a higher power to suggest to him that anything of importance in this connection might be learned from Hegel. The dominant view holds to a purely external connection between logic and reality, and this is precisely the position Hegel rejected. When a given view or method is firmly entrenched and endowed with academic approval, it is bound to appear to its adherents as the only view. In the course of time those committed to it become so accustomed to thinking *within* it that they gradually cease to think *about* it in the sense of criticizing and defending it in the light of other alternatives. There arises in the end a dogmatism which is based upon an utter failure to see that there are any other alternatives at all.

Many modern logicians appear to have worked themselves into this position. The conception of logic as a formal system based on conventions, or construed as the structure of a language the business of which is to govern the structuring of other languages, seems to dominate our thinking about this ancient subject. And yet those of us who pay some attention to the history of logic know that logic has been conceived in the past in more than one way. We know, moreover, that no comprehensive philosopher has ever supposed it possible to frame and maintain a conception of reason and logical form in entire disregard of a doctrine of the nature of things. The comprehensive philosophers of the past knew that the nature of thought cannot be considered without also considering all that comes to mind when we raise the ancient question of 'what there is'.

This brings us to the specific problem upon which I want to focus

attention: the relation between logic and reality or, in more classical language, the relation between thought and being. The current importance of the problem can be seen from the fact that behind the entire enterprise of formal logic in the past half-century has been the presupposition of an utter separation between logical form on one side, and on the other side of the relationship, what has been variously called experience, facts, objects, things and, more rarely, nature or reality. I need not reiterate that, in the minds of some, the divorce between the two sides is so complete that the pole which is not thought or logic has fallen from sight completely, and what would pass as reality has itself been reduced to a system of conceptions. Or if this way of putting it has seemed to some too 'metaphysical', they have been quick to couch the whole problem within the confines of language. The idea of a hierarchy of languages has been introduced and reality, in so far as it is referred to at all, appears as no more than an object language or the lowest level language in a series.

Our present philosophical situation forces upon us two tasks. On the one hand we must seek to underline the point that every conception of logic or thought implies some view of the nature of reality or that which is other than thought. And second, we need to make clear the extent to which much modern logic, for all of its debt to the rationalist tradition, has generally been based on the view of reality characteristic of modern empiricism, according to which thought stands in a wholly external relation to a content atomic in character and without essential structure of its own.

Regardless of the many misgivings we may have about Hegel's system of philosophy, we cannot ignore the fact that he, above all modern philosophers, understood the inner dialectic of modern philosophy and especially its involvement in the problem of relating thought to the real world. More specifically, a dominant aim of his philosophy was the overcoming of the dichotomy between thought and reality stemming from certain developments initiated by the metaphysics of Descartes. Hegel has sketched this development in a brilliant and incisive way in the Introduction to his *Encyclopaedia*. His account of the movement of philosophical thinking concerning the relation between thought and reality is, naturally, determined by the resolution he came to offer in his own speculative logic. It is clear, however, that whether we remain content with his solution or not, the problem he describes and his view of the manner in which it has forced itself upon us have direct bearing upon our present situation. The problem lurks behind and beneath many current logical discussions – for example, the extended discussion over the distinction between *analytic* and *synthetic* – although the fact is often obscured due to the widespread belief that perennial metaphysical prob-

lems can be dismissed for good, or even that the soluble aspects of these problems have now been settled in a definite way.

It seems almost inevitable that when we seek to understand an issue presented to us through the history of modern philosophy, we find ourselves beginning with Descartes. Hegel, like many others, saw that it was Descartes who first taught us to view thought and knowledge from the standpoint of the idea or concept and to stand, so to speak, inside of the idea for the purpose of detecting the characteristics which are the signs or criteria of its knowing function. The very approach pushes us in the direction of a sharp separation between the idea and the object, between thought and reality. This is not to say that on Descartes's view we are confined to our own ideas or that reality is nothing but ideas. The fact is, as Hegel was well aware, Descartes still believed in a reason which has ontological bearing such that, under certain conditions, it can attain to knowledge of a reality other than itself. The *cogito* is the primary evidence for this claim, but it is no less supported by Descartes's invocation of the classical conception of truth in the argument for God and the world of nature. These conclusions could never have been reached if he had assumed, for example, the conception of reason which Hume maintained. Descartes belongs, in this regard, to the tradition stemming from Plato and Aristotle and surviving for the most part until the seventeenth century, according to which reason is no mere psychological power of reasoning, but the presence of order, measure and form both in reality and in the *logos* through which it is expressed. Descartes, though he ultimately held fast to this view, began a movement of thought which was to result in its rejection. The end did not come in this time, but in the succeeding century, the period of the great empiricists. By the time of Hume, reason and reality were completely separated from each other.

In beginning with reflection, Descartes focused an issue and opened the door to what was to prove a more radical retirement into the subjective consciousness. The final result, as we know from the resulting empirical tradition, was either a total rejection of, or the granting of no more than limited validity to, the traditional ontological principle according to which the power of reason is acknowledged and is believed capable of genuine knowledge of a reality other than itself. Hegel in the end found Descartes's solution defective; but we must not get ahead of our story, since we are first to consider Hegel's account of the attitudes adopted by thought to objectivity – as he calls them – and Descartes's position is treated at a determinate point in that discussion. To Descartes we shall return, but not before the other approaches have been considered.

In the long Introduction contained in the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel set forth an analysis of three theories which express the relation between logic and reality, thought and being. For present purposes it will be more valuable to fix attention on these theories, rather

than on Hegel's own solution, because of the light they throw upon the philosophical thinking of the immediate present. Hegel interpreted and criticized philosophical positions in the lights of a principle which is essential to a sound philosophy, the principle, namely, that an intelligible account of the relation between thought and reality remains an inescapable desideratum. Knowledge, if attainable at all, cannot remain a brute fact. It cannot be left as an abstract possession, totally unrelated to the reality of which it is knowledge. Among the data which philosophy must account for is knowledge itself and, contrary to much that has been thought and believed for the past few hundred years, knowledge itself cannot be understood apart from a theory of the nature of things. Epistemology, in short, can never be developed entirely apart from metaphysics. Failure to understand how knowledge itself can be made intelligible usually results either in a total scepticism or in the reduction of reality to a tissue of ideas of subjective experience. The latter alternative is realized on the current scene in the form of logical systems which are enclosed within their own limits, so that the question of their relation to a reality finally does not arise. Or if this relation is made the subject of inquiry, the problem is frequently treated in an *ad hoc* fashion or is settled on the basis of common sense. It is interesting to note that a makeshift solution is usually good enough for those who have been driven by some outside force to raise an issue which they would never have paid attention to on its own merit.

The three approaches of thought to reality considered by Hegel are respectively, first, the dogmatic metaphysics of the past, by which he means pre-Kantian metaphysics – particularly that of the rationalist tradition; second, empiricism, which means the identification of reality with the immediate data of sense. It is primarily the approach adopted by the British empiricists, although Kant's critical philosophy is also included under this head. Third, Hegel considers intuitionism, by which he means the rational immediacy of Descartes and the aesthetic immediacy of Jacobi. One of the advantages of Hegel's approach is that, while the reference to particular thinkers aids us in focusing the critical treatment of the issues, the positions are viewed as perennial possibilities of solution and not merely as historical phenomena such as might be recorded by those interested in cultural history but who have no concern for the philosophical truth of the solution. We need not, therefore, be too much bound by Descartes or Kant or Jacobi, since they are representatives of a type of thought and of attitudes perennial in character. Hegel makes this point himself in speaking of pre-Kantian metaphysics:

It is however only in reference to the history of philosophy that this metaphysic can be said to belong to the past: the thing is always and

at all times to be found, as the view which the abstract understanding takes of the objects of reason.¹

First approach – dogmatic metaphysics

The primary and distinguishing characteristic of this view is, as Hegel says, 'an unquestioning belief that reflection is the means of ascertaining the truth and of bringing the objects before the mind as they really are'.² The approach is naive in the technical sense that doubts concerning the relation between objective and subjective have not arisen; there is a straightforward move on the part of thought towards reality, and no need is seen for a preliminary examination of reason's credentials. Hegel rightly says that there is a truth in this position which is inescapable; namely, that reality is so structured that it can be grasped by rational categories. However, the question which cannot be avoided is this: have we any guarantee that the categories of human thought operative at a given time are really adequate for grasping reality in its total range and extent? We cannot argue that the legitimacy of reason is presupposed in every instance of its use, because it is possible to cite actual examples in which a given category or predicate has proved inadequate to its subject matter. Hegel's example goes to the heart of the matter, and its relevance to recent discussion is obvious enough. In expressing the charge that the rational metaphysics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries borrowed all its categories from finite, sensible experience, Hegel cites the problem of God's existence. He shows that behind the question as posed in that philosophy is the supposition that existence is a wholly positive concept which can be applied to God unqualifiedly and without reflective criticism. How, he asked, can we use the concept of existence in speaking of God when we have already allowed that its whole meaning is determined by finite things? God does not 'exist' in the same sense as the spatio-temporally defined individuals exist. This means that if we are to continue to use the term for the divine, we shall have to give to it a meaning appropriate to its subject. Tillich has reiterated this point in many writings, and it is at the root of a recent suggestion by Maritain that we retain the concept of existence in relation to God by introducing an analogy of existence which would allow for the special extended meaning required.

To return to the central point, the naive rationalism of the first approach cannot be sustained, because we cannot prevent questions about the adequacy of our categories from arising. And when they do arise a distinction between subjective and objective reason is already presupposed. The thoroughly naive objectivism or realism has been left behind. There are other reasons, not all of which are cited by Hegel, why the

metaphysics based upon an uncritical rationalism cannot be successfully maintained in its own terms. Chief among them is the need for a critical theory of the relation between thought and reality, once the question of the adequacy of reason has presented itself. A vigorous reassertion of the naive and direct approach to reality through reason does not suffice to turn the edge of scepticism, and while I would agree with Hegel in his doubts about an epistemology which implies a knowing before we can know, it is no less important to see that we cannot ignore the eruption of subjectivity into the philosophical picture, nor can we turn our backs upon problems raised by the rediscovery of the self in modern philosophy. Hegel and the modern idealist tradition have often been misunderstood at this point. Their concern for the relation between thought and reality was not meant to continue a line of purely logical or epistemological discussion which postpones substantive issues, but rather to point up the truth that reality must embrace both object and subject, the idea as well as that about which it purports to be true. Traditional realism always risks loss of the subject because of its tendency to understand reality as that which stands over against the self and as including everything but the standpoint from which it is known.

Second approach – empiricism and critical philosophy

Here we come to a philosophical position and a type of thinking which has dominated philosophy for the past hundred years. Contrary to what has been generally supposed, Hegel had a high regard for an empirical principle in philosophy, although he could not accept the classical British empiricism and its narrow view of the nature of experience. The move towards experience and the resulting empirical philosophy was prompted initially, Hegel claims, by two shortcomings in the previous rationalism:

Partly it was the need of a concrete subject matter, as a counterpoise to the abstract theories of the understanding which is unable to advance unaided from its generalities to specialization and determination. Partly, too, it was the demand for something fixed and secure, so as to exclude the possibility of proving anything and everything in the sphere, and according to the method, of the finite formulae of thought.³

Hegel was most astute in seeing that it is not merely to *sense* that empiricism makes its appeals, but to the certainty of *present* existence both internally and externally. Actually, classical empiricism was seeking the same certainty which we associate with Cartesian rationalism; the two differ only in the object selected. Whereas Descartes found certainty in the conceptual clarity of universals – clear and distinct ideas – the empiri-

cists found it in the singular sensible datum – lively impressions. In both cases actual presence to the mind is the one essential feature. But for empiricism thought is to have no validity or import beyond what can actually be found in phenomena co-present with an observer, and thought can include no connections except those taken to be actually present in the sensible datum. The consequence is that reality is reduced to the sphere of finite objects, and the possibility of what transcends sense is either denied outright or forced beyond the confines of knowledge. Thought, as a direct consequence – and this is the point most essential for present purposes – is constricted to a very limited function; it can abstract universals and it can construct systems based on formal identity, but it has no uniting or synthesizing function, nor can it attain to any reality but that of the sensible present. Inference beyond the present is allowed, but it is interpreted as a mere shorthand way of describing what the future would be like if it were now present.

With empiricism begins the process through which thought becomes formalized and is set over against sensible data as the absolutely other. Consider, for example, Hume's analysis of ingratitude and his argument to show that reason is utterly incapable of discovering a moral relationship. The only relations of ideas he acknowledged are highly abstract ones such as identity, difference, contrariety and so forth. It is not difficult to see that such abstract relations are incapable of expressing concrete states of affairs adequately, so that he had an easy time of showing that contrariety, the relation through which he tries to express a case of ingratitude, has no special moral import; and from this he concludes that reason is incompetent in the sphere of ethics. It did not occur to him to suppose that the supposed incompetence is a function of the abstract categories and the narrow conception of reason with which he worked.

If, moreover, reason becomes formalized and is forced, so to speak, into an abstract domain of its own, the only relations that can possibly obtain between thought and the real world it is to know are very external ones – correlation and conjunction. When reality is entirely other than thought, only the most external relations between the two are possible. The peculiar nature of knowing and of knowledge thus becomes obscured, and reality no longer appears as intrinsically intelligible except perhaps in the limited sphere of the exact sciences, which admittedly deal only with those highly abstract features which a formalized reason can express. The withdrawal of intelligibility from reality in a rich and full sense leads to a most unfortunate consequence, the banishing of the properly spiritual aspects of experience – art, morality, religion and politics – from the realm of reason. It is no accident that wherever reason has been emptied and formalized as a result of an overweening empiricism, all of the immediate and practical concerns of life have been handed over to the power of convention, caprice and custom.

Hegel sees still another side to the dialectic of empiricism. It has the merit, he says, of bringing us back to the concrete. Whatever reality may finally be taken to be, it surely cannot be poorer in content than what is initially encountered in sensation. Empiricism, in taking the concrete seriously – and in this we can agree with Hegel – has the advantage over abstract rationalism in all of its forms. But though empiricism makes, in this sense, a good start, it is unable to sustain the promise of its beginning. In its effort to arrive at an ordered and unified experience starting from a beginning in sensation, empiricism invariably overlooks the fact that a reason capable only of analysis and not of synthesis is unable to accomplish the task. The attack upon analysis has been closely associated with Hegel's philosophy; it is an error to suppose that he rejected it out of hand, as Russell and others have repeatedly claimed; it is rather that he questioned its sufficiency. What concerned Hegel was the answer to this question: how are we to arrive at the concreteness, integrity and continuity of direct experience, if we are limited by a reason which can divide and dissect but cannot unite? Hegel says,

analysis is the process from the immediacy of sensation to thought: those attributes, which the object analyzed contains in union, acquire the form of universality by being separated. Empiricism therefore labors under a delusion, if it supposes that, while analyzing the objects, it leaves them as they were; it really transforms the concrete into an abstract. And as a consequence of this change the living thing is killed: life can only exist in the concrete and one. Not that we can do without this division, if it be our intention to comprehend. . . . The error lies in forgetting that this is only one-half of the process, and that the main point is the reunion of what has been parted.⁴

Here we see one of the major reasons why empiricism, understood as a final standpoint from which to construe reality, always sets itself in opposition to the development of a constructive metaphysic. Reality, embracing both objects and subjects, exhibits a unity and integrity of its own; a comprehensive metaphysic or interpretation of reality is bound to respect all of its features. If, however, our only access to knowledge of reality is through a process of analysis which can do no more than resolve presented wholes into atomic parts, we may be able to reach an analytic science, but we shall not approach the synthesis and interpretation of philosophy. We may, of course, question whether empiricism must of necessity adopt a view of reason which confines it to analysis alone. That it has adopted such a view in its modern forms is, nevertheless, the fact. Doubts about the validity of reason in spheres other than those of formal logic, mathematics and natural science have always followed from assuming that reason means analysis and nothing more. Analysis as the

goal of thought leads inevitably to the conceiving of reality as the domain of atomic fact, a domain, in short, from which intelligibility is effectively excluded. It is thus no accident that, when reason is excluded from concrete life and existence, an attempt is made to find a sphere where it does have power. The difficulty, however, is that the only kingdom in which it can reign is that of empty form; concrete life and human existence are left outside its scope. We cannot express reality in all its richness with a purely formalized reason.⁵ The entire philosophical work of Hegel was in fact a protest against this result, and if he went too far in his exaltation of the power of synthetic or constructive reason, he was surely right in questioning whether reason is exhausted by its analytic function. If we can succeed in showing that reason is more than analysis, it will be possible to avoid some of the unfortunate consequences that have followed from the overly narrow conception of reason to be found in recent philosophical thought.

As part of his examination of empiricism, Hegel considers the critical philosophy of Kant. Here we need not concern ourselves with the whole of his interpretation and criticism; most germane is Hegel's treatment of what he takes to be Kant's view of the status of thought in relation to the real world. On the one hand, Kant is defended by Hegel for having seen the need to recover and set forth the categories of thought through the reflective analysis of experience. Kant's approach, he claims, is superior to the naive approach which applies categories to every subject matter without raising the question of their adequacy and appropriateness. On the other hand – and this is the fundamental point at issue between the two thinkers – Hegel will not allow that, when thought examines itself, it discovers only empty categories, self-contained and set over against the material content to be known by means of them. Hegel holds instead that we do not obtain a true view of the categories of thought when we regard them as purely empty forms which become significant only on the occasion of being filled with a sensible content wholly distinct in nature. The categories have a meaning of their own.

Another way of expressing the point Hegel wants to make is to say that, if we investigate the relation of the categories to reality and seek to understand them in their knowing function, we must view them in and through that function, i.e. as actually knowing. Hegel's contention is that to view them solely in themselves as pure or empty is precisely to view them when they are not engaged in knowing and when they are separated from their proper function. Putting the point in still another way, we may say that the very process of critical reflection on the categories is itself either a case of knowing or it is not. If it is not, Kant's conclusions are not binding upon us but, instead, take the form of postulates or proposals, a consequence which Kant would, of course, have rejected. If, on the other hand, the critical reflection is a knowing, then reason

and its categories are already presumed to have legitimate status and to be capable of reaching truth and reality. Hegel exposed the predicament of reflective reason in the following way: if the process and result of critical reflection – even one which comes to a sceptical conclusion – are to be legitimate, the capacity of reason to produce legitimate conclusions must already be presupposed, and the question would seem to be begged at the outset. There are many problems raised; suffice it to say that it was the aim of Hegel to bring reason back again to a consciousness of its own legitimate status in the world by showing that, in order to understand what knowledge is, we must understand the categories in their actual knowing function, at the point, that is, when they are engaged in structuring experience.

Hegel's quarrel with Kant is to be found chiefly in his charge that Kant succeeded in separating reason from the real world by confining its scope to the sphere of phenomena. Understanding for Kant, or what Hegel called finite thought, is, it is true, actually constitutive of experience and thus does not form, as it does for Hume, a contrast to the object of empirical knowledge. But Kant's reason in the sense of the power to grasp totalities as such is not adequate to the task of knowing what transcends partial and sensibly conditioned experience. In this sense reason becomes abstract because where it seeks to transcend sense it can reach no further than its own form. The latter conclusion led Hegel to place Kant among the empiricists who elevate knowledge of finite things to the highest rank and deny to reason the capacity to grasp transcendent or purely intelligible realities.

Hegel, nevertheless, saw in Kant the comprehensive dialectic of modern empiricism; contemporary philosophers would do well to pay attention to these depths instead of viewing Kant as a purely epistemological thinker. In raising the problem of a transcendental logic, Kant was asking for a *tertium quid* or relation that would serve to make intelligible the connection between the categories and the world of individuals they are to know. The Humean form of empiricism abandons the problem and is content to accept the formula that, where we have necessity in thought, we are separated entirely from reality or experience, and where we introduce reality, we can have no necessity. This is the great divorce upon which empiricism feeds, and it was precisely the aim of Kant to expose it. We may even view his transcendental deduction of the categories as an attempt to re-establish an intelligible connection between thought and reality and thus to recover a portion at least of the classical ontological principle. The problem posed by Kant's position is that he could not succeed in establishing the connection for the whole of reality at every level. His own empiricism allowed him to recover it only for 'experience' – which means for mathematics and the general science of

nature – but not for metaphysics. Kant is thus somewhere between Hume and Hegel; he focused an issue which he did not finally resolve.

Third approach – intuitive knowledge

In this connection Hegel considers the position of Jacobi and Descartes. Jacobi's position poses special problems not germane to the present discussion; we shall ignore him and concentrate on the position represented by Descartes. Hegel rightly sees that Descartes wanted to establish the identity of idea and being so that, in having the idea before us, we have no 'mere' idea but the reality as well. In making this point, Hegel notes what is correct but often overlooked, namely, that the *cogito* in Descartes is no syllogism but an immediate apprehension. Hegel asks whether the position, in order to maintain itself, does not require the claim that immediate knowledge alone possesses a true content to the total exclusion of mediation. Hegel answers in the affirmative and claims that the position is untenable. There are many points in Hegel's discussion; one basic consideration will suffice. He claims that the identity thesis, if it is to be articulated and defended, cannot exclude mediation and that in fact it does not. The idea, according to the theory, is not to be solely on its own account, but only when it apprehends being, i.e. when it is clearly in consciousness. On the other side, being is not true all by itself but only by being the fulfilment of the idea. Each side is dependent upon the other; truth is a synthesis of both idea and being. But every synthesis involves mediation, for the identity of two sides would be empty without a difference; to understand how this is so requires in turn a process of thought which cannot be immediate. Here is exposed the main difficulty in any philosophy of pure immediacy; its articulation, expression and defence always introduce an element of difference, a breaking up of the immediate identity. We do not just *have* the immediate identity; we say that there is such an identity under specific conditions. The conclusion is that immediacy must be a result and never a starting point; we can move up to it, but we cannot begin with it. For to begin with immediacy is to cut off the possibility of advancing beyond that state; in order to have a genuine becoming and a real advance beyond tautology we need an element of difference and hence of mediation.

Of course, as Hegel was not unaware, there are more direct and less dialectical difficulties to be urged against the position of immediate rationalism. They may be mentioned in order to complete the picture despite the fact that there is little danger at present of any return to that position in its rationalistic form. Immediate type rationalism opens the way for replacing the idea of truth with that of certainty, since in immediate knowing the main emphasis falls on consciousness and the criterion

of truth does not appear as something rooted in the content. Second, the way is opened for the will to introduce a variety of contents of its own which are taken to be true solely because they are believed or asserted with vigour; the denial of mediation precludes the possibility of criticism. And finally, with respect to God at least – I would add also the self – immediacy is able to deliver only the *that* but is unable to advance to the *what*; unfolding of the content requires mediation. To claim to know no more than *that* something is leads in time to scepticism concerning its reality.

If we survey the three approaches of thought to being, we may say that there are at least two main lessons to be learned from Hegel's dialectical account of modern philosophy in so far as this problem is a central one. Each has to do with consequences following from a failure to find an intelligible and consistent connection between thought and being. First, the gradual loss of concern for being as the synthesis of essence and existence, the *what* and the *that*, has led to the alienation of logic or thought from the reality it is to apprehend and articulate. As a corollary of the split, there has been a corresponding decline in the power of reason and a loss of the classical ontological principle that reality is intelligible and is thus capable of being grasped by a subjective or finite reason. Second, the withdrawal of reason from being in its full extent has meant the reduction of being to the proportions of sensible being and the corresponding loss of God and of the self. We may develop each of these lessons briefly.

The sundering of thought, understood as essence, from existence, understood as sensible fact, manifests itself most vividly in the development of one-sided philosophies which seek to overcome each other. Modern rationalism at one pole has chosen a metaphysic of essence, of universals, or more recently, of descriptions; and the attempt has been made in a variety of ways to make a process of complete rational determination or specification take the place of existence and concrete individuality. There is the awe-inspiring example of McTaggart's metaphysics, in which the whole of reality is to be expressed exhaustively in terms of general descriptions, except that, as he disarmingly notes at the outset, it is necessary to admit into the system one empirical premise – 'something exists'. At the other extreme, there is the position based on existence as sensible fact. The latter-day Humean, John Stuart Mill, aimed at having his revenge and at teaching rationalism a lesson by constructing reality solely in terms of sensible particulars, by transforming mathematics into an empirical science, and by making all reasoning an advance from particular to particular with no universals in between. This type of empiricism finds its ideal of reality in a complete collection of particulars each of which is fully identified in isolation by a proper name which denotes but does not describe. If the first view tries to make the completeness of

essence swallow up or take the place of existence, the latter tries to make a total collection of particular existence obviate the need for rational connection and systematic interpretation.

The peculiarity of such a dialectic is that, though the two positions are in theory externally related, they mutually condition and determine each other. As empiricism advanced towards the ideal of atomic fact, reason became more and more emptied and reduced to mathematical form. Banished from the real world, mathematicians and logicians in conspiracy were to have their revenge by carving out a world of their own, a world of mathematical logic and of purely logical mathematics. The next step was the attempt to combine the two separated poles in the position known as logical empiricism, one of the most curious marriages on the philosophical record. Only an extraordinary ability to avoid self-understanding has saved the proponents of this view from seeing the final impossibility of expressing a reality which is all singular atomic fact through a logic which has in it nothing but universals.

Knowledge, on such a view, must itself become unintelligible because it will be reduced to the correlation between an idea and its object or to the conjunction of the two. No other than purely external relations are possible between two items taken to be 'wholly other than' each other. Either we are able to find a genuine synthetic relationship – a *tertium quid* – or we must fall back on the external relations. An intricate matter such as knowledge cannot be understood in terms of relations like correlation and conjunction. To rest with them is the same as saying that we have no theory at all. When knowing expresses no more than the correlation or conjunction of logic and reality, it is effectively reduced to a mechanical process; such a development leads many at present to speak of machines that think.

The second lesson is in many ways the more important because it concerns the loss of the self and, in many cases, of unconditional being as well. The theory which contracts reasons into empty form and thus confines it to logic, mathematics and certain highly abstract natural sciences, abandons reality in many features of its concreteness to unintelligibility. If we then bring to this situation the further premise that what cannot be expressed by so empty a reason may be safely ignored or relegated to the sphere of emotion or private feeling, it is but a short step from there to the claim that what cannot be thus expressed does not exist or does not count. In this way God and the self come to be denied or, if this puts the case too strongly, they are placed effectively beyond the domain of rational comprehension. The anguished discovery that this situation is intolerable for the self-conscious person who knows that he is a responsible being and that he cannot give up his quest for some meaning for his being has led in recent decades to the flowering of that most varied and interesting movement which we sum up under the name

of existentialism. Paradoxically enough, since some existentialists are opposed to metaphysics, it is one of the few points at which contemporary philosophy is bold enough to flirt with the question of being. And here we may bring the discussion to a close on what must be, in the context of lessons from Hegel, an ironical note. Whether rightly or not, the philosophy of existence began in the attempt to recover existence in the face of what was thought to be its reduction to essence in Hegel's dialectic. Saying no more than that there is some truth in the charge – Hegel was guilty of doing some violence to the reality of the concrete individual – we must point out nevertheless that Hegel still has a lesson to teach the exponents of the position which would appear as his antithesis.

From the standpoint of existence as the bare 'that', you cannot adequately express being, for being is the synthesis of essence and existence. If you have no more in your philosophy than the conception of existence as a surd, you are not likely to get beyond that point except perhaps with a dialectic gone mad which produces the conclusion that existence is absurd! I do not say that this is the necessary dialectic of the philosophy of existence; it is, however, a conclusion difficult to avoid when we have existence without essence. Yet we cannot deny that, in the extremely broken situation which confronts us, it is the philosophy of existence which keeps the being question alive, and this remains true even if we say that existentialism cannot reach being without help from beyond itself. But Hegel would surely point out that a situation in which there exists an unbridgeable gulf between existentialism, on one side, and logical formalism, on the other, is a direct consequence of our failure to work out a satisfactory account of the relation between logic and reality. The more the side of thought came to express itself as essentially a realm of timeless universals, classes, sets, concepts, which cannot reach singular existence, the more it appeared that concrete existence was abandoned. The reaction which came in the form of a 'revolt of existence' was based on the feeling of abandonment; existence took its revenge by focusing on all the urgent concerns of individual and subjective existence, and existentialists came to regard logical issues as merely speculative and irrelevant. Between the two sides there appears to be no bridge and little communication. The important question is: What can we do about the situation?

It seems clear that what is most needed is to start a process of critical reflection; as long as philosophical positions remain wholly self-contained, secure within their assumptions, and determined to carry out their particular programmes without regard to other points of view, there is no way of making clear what their limitations and distortions may be. In so far as philosophy itself is rooted in the belief that reality must have some sort of intelligibility, the philosophic task remains unfinished as long as we leave the situation basically unintelligible. We need a fundamental

re-examination of the nature and function of reason and of existence; we need to remind ourselves of the inadequacy of the view which reduces reason to empty and timeless form and existence to surd – or, as it may be, absurd – fact. It is impossible to explain how one side can know the other under these circumstances. A re-examination will lead us to see that experience and knowledge are complex affairs, the component parts of which can be understood in their synthetic unity only if we abandon the more mechanical models we have used – correlation, picturing facts – for analysing knowledge and if we seek more organic conceptions.

An even more fundamental question is whether we can hope to avoid the impasses of the modern philosophical situation without recovering the ancient principle that existence has form within it and that it can be grasped by human reason, the principle in short, that knowledge is possible because there is a more than external relation between logic and reality. This principle which had maintained itself successfully throughout the main portion of the Western philosophical development was called most sharply into question by the eruption of subjectivity into modern philosophy. The aim of Hegel was to establish the principle but to do so in full awareness of the grounds upon which it had come to be questioned. He would not have agreed with the view, held by some at present, that the entire problem can be solved merely by a return to the natural realism of Aristotle. On the contrary, he could not regard the development of thought from Descartes to Kant as no more than a mistake based upon a false elevation of subjectivity. He rightly regarded subjectivity as an essential element in our account of experience, and he sought to prevent it from becoming subjectivism through his dialectic of the whole. Whether we accept his resolution or not is perhaps not so important as that we should see the impossibility of turning back the clock in order to adopt an ancient position uncritically. We shall have to begin by taking seriously where we actually are plus the development of the past two hundred years, understanding the full implications of the rediscovery of the autonomy of reason in modern thought. Hegel saw very well that the total fact will have to include not only the reality standing as over against the subject, but the subject and his reason as well. He was too one-sided in wanting to derive all unity and universality from reason alone, but he surely saw the problem; unless we pay attention to both terms in the relationship between existence, or reality, and reason, we shall once again have the bifurcated world. Not the bifurcation of value and fact, although that is one of the further consequences, but the more basic split between form and existence, between logic and reality. As long as the two are believed to be without intrinsic connection with each other, but one result is possible: logic will appear as all empty form and reality will become all atomic fact. Such an outlook cannot escape the double one-sidedness of empty rationalism on one side and anxious existence on the other.

Notes

1 *The Logic of Hegel*, transl. from *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, W. Wallace, transl. (Oxford, 1892), 27, p. 61.

2 *ibid.*, 26, p. 60.

3 *ibid.*, 37, p. 76.

4 *ibid.*, 38, pp. 79–80.

5 See Plato, *Sophist* 249A. Reality is more than phenomena passively apprehended; it embraces active spirit or mind as well.

Hegel's idealism and Hegel's Logic

Terry Pinkard

Among the many charges brought against Hegel is one which is so recurrent that it might seem to be irrefutable: that he was an idealist in some kind of indefensible way. People as diverse as Marx, Kierkegaard and Russell have variously ridiculed him for this. The people who have so charged Hegel mean that he held the metaphysical thesis that what existed was mental. It is true, it is said, that he cosmologized idealism and infinitely expanded it more than, say, Berkeley, but a cosmological idealist is still, none the less, an idealist.

What I would like to do in this paper is to free Hegel from this charge. That is, I propose to show that Hegelian idealism is not necessarily this bad form but something much different, more subtle and more defensible. To do this, my strategy will be twofold. First, I wish to provide an interpretation of Hegel's general procedure which will show that there are no 'bad metaphysical idealist' presuppositions necessarily built into it. Second, I wish to look more specifically at a particularly vexatious part of Hegel's theory, his doctrine of 'the concept' and the basics of his philosophy of formal logic. The case against Hegel has often been felt to be particularly strong there, but I wish to show that, there too, no implications of metaphysical idealism need be present. In part, then, this paper is an outline for a new reading of the third book of Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* (hereafter *WdL*). The guiding aim throughout will be to present the rudiments for a fresh appraisal of the contemporary significance of Hegel's philosophy.

I

Although Hegel is taken variously to be the chronicler of the development of the cosmos, the apostle of contradiction, the oracle of absolute spirit

and so on, his philosophy shall be taken here in a much more modest sense: Hegel will be seen as perhaps the most thorough-going *compatibilist* of the philosophical tradition. His aim is to show that many apparent contradictions between basic categories or between competing categorial systems are only that: *apparent* and not real contradictions. The apparent contradiction can be avoided if one correctly expands and orders one's categorial scheme. This is nowadays a commonplace thing among many philosophers of an analytic persuasion; seemingly opposed concepts like freedom and necessity (and their counterparts, the categorial frameworks of libertarianism and determinism) are often claimed not in fact to be opposed but compatible notions, provided one's conceptual framework is correctly construed. Hegel, however, went even further. Many other notions, such as the actual and potential infinite, liberty and the organic state, even competing philosophical systems were at their roots compatible with one another. It is only by adhering to the 'one-sidedness' of the 'understanding' – that faculty which tries to verify isolated propositions – and not by attending to 'reason' – that faculty which constructs systems of propositions and sees the verification of propositions as a holistic affair – that such incompatibilities can be generated in the first place.

Hegel's programme may be viewed as an attempt to construct a categorial framework which successfully balances two things: (1) competing categorial schemes; (2) to do this by reconstructing according to a finite set of basic principles the basic concepts of experience, science¹ and the history of philosophy. Hegel's programme, that is, may be viewed not primarily as a metaphysics of absolute spirit but (more humbly) as a piece of categorial construction and analysis. This interpretative hypothesis may, however, sound wrong from the outset. Is not Hegel, after all, the philosopher *par excellence* of history and of God's way through it? To give this interpretative hypothesis some weight, therefore, the general interpretative scheme must be fleshed out.

Philosophy, according to Hegel, is the 'thinking study of things', the 'translation' of various items into the 'form of thought'.² It is also inherently systematic. What may Hegel be taken to mean by such things? Philosophy, we may say, is on the Hegelian model of it an attempt to provide the most general conceptual framework for all the sciences; it is thus continuous with and not separate from the sciences. It attempts to provide, that is, an *explanation* of how these schemes 'hang together'. 'Explanation' is, of course, a multi-faceted notion and is most often identified with prediction. There is, however, another sense to 'explanation' in which it is not essentially prediction; it is the sense of explanation as redescription, and it is this sense which seems to capture the Hegelian notion of explanation. Something is explained, that is, when it is redescribed in the terms or concepts of some other framework which is held to be more coherent (or better in at least some sense) than

the original framework in which the thing was described. Since it is a redescription in terms of some superior system, this kind of explanation may be called *systematic redescription*. Moreover, this sense can lay claim to being a more fundamental sense of 'explanation' than the competing notions of explanation. Boiling water, for example, is explained when it is redescribed in the terms of the system of microtheoretical physics. Adult fears and daydreams may be explained when redescribed in the terms of some systematic psychoanalytic theory. Hegel's *WdL* may be taken thus as a systematic redescription of the basic categories of experience, science and history of philosophy. This has a corollary, a thesis on understanding: we understand what we can explain, and we explain something by integrating it – systematically redescribing it – within a more coherent framework. The systematic character of Hegel's philosophy is thus also its explanatory character.

The object of such a reconstruction (a systematic redescription) is 'not things (*Dinge*)' but 'facts, the concept of things' ('*die Sache, der Begriff der Dinge*').³ The *WdL* is, moreover, the 'development of thought'.⁴ However, thought in its 'immanent determinations' has 'the same content' as 'the true nature of things' (*Dinge*).⁵ The 'facts in themselves' ('*Sachen an sich selbst*') are, moreover, pure thoughts (*Gedanken*).⁶ If the method is the 'course of the facts themselves' ('*der Gang der Sache selbst*'),⁷ then it follows logically from Hegel's own words that the *WdL* is a reconstruction not of the movement of the things in the cosmos but instead merely of concepts. This would seem to confirm the thesis that the *WdL* is primarily a piece of categorial analysis and construction and not a cosmological treatise.

Nevertheless, a critic of this mildly revisionist view of the *WdL* might charge that by identifying the content of the 'true nature' of things with thought, Hegel has given as bald a statement of idealism in as metaphysical a sense as one could want. But this interpretation need not be taken. Hegel may be taken simply as saying that the categorial framework construed is necessarily a representation of the way the world is. That is, the categorial system may be taken as a *transcendental* framework. The set of categories, that is, is necessary, i.e. indispensable in making true descriptions of the world. No metaphysical thesis would be implied by that, but some argument must be given for this claim to indispensability.

Obviously one way which would have suggested itself to Hegel for arguing for the indispensability of the categories would be Kant's transcendental procedure. The 'objective reality' of these categories was claimed by Kant to be demonstrated by showing them to be conditions for the possibility of experience. But Hegel rejected this mode of argument as vague and subjective. His alternative proposal was that the indispensability of the category could be shown by demonstrating it to be a logical

condition for the determinateness of some other category (this is apparently what it meant by Hegel's talk of the 'immanent development' of thought). A category would then be a general determination which can be established by more or less *a priori* and not empirical considerations. Hegel, of course, held that these *a priori* considerations had to be systemic ones. If one put oneself in the place of some Hegel-like figure who had reached these conclusions, one would conclude that the next item on the agenda would obviously be to provide an answer to two questions: with which category does one begin, and how are these intra-categorical implications to be arranged?

To answer this, however, one other charge of pejorative idealism must be first answered. Does not Hegel in speaking of the 'movement' of concepts commit himself to at least some objectionable metaphysical hypostatization of concepts? This 'movement' of concepts must therefore be clarified. As an interpretative model for this, we might use the familiar notion of a game. A piece in a game is a *normative kind*, that is an entity whose being is entirely constituted by a set of rules which tell how it may be moved.⁸ A piece is a piece only in terms of the *role* it plays in a game. Pieces in a game have two components: (1) a descriptive, accidental component – a statement of what the stuff is from which the piece is made; (2) a prescriptive, essential component – a description of the rules which constitute its being. A pawn, for example, might be made of wood and have a characteristic shape (its descriptive component), but what is essential to it are the rules which constitute something's being a pawn. A pawn could ultimately be made of anything: wood, plastic, bottle tops and so on. *Concepts* may be construed as such normative kinds: their being (in this case, their determinateness) is constituted by the rules which govern them. As such, they too have a descriptive component (the vocables in terms of which they are expressed, for example, 'red', *rot*, *rouge*) and a prescriptive component. The rules which sanction a move from one concept to another are the *logical* relations between the concepts.

The movement of concepts in the *WdL* may therefore be taken as a metaphor for their logical relations. The *WdL* would then be an elaborate construction in which the determinateness of concepts is constituted by their moves (or inferential relations) *vis-à-vis* one another. The game analogy, however, fails at one crucial point: what moves in the 'game' of the *WdL* is not the concepts but thought itself. Each concept is a *position* in the game to which thought moves. On this model, then, we can understand what the movement and course of concepts is and what is meant by the immanent development of thought without any commitment to a bad form of idealism.

The rules must be well founded, then, if the *WdL* is not to turn literally into just a game (Kierkegaard, of course, always accused the *WdL* of

being this anyway). For the purpose of this paper, we need not go deeply into the specifics of Hegel's procedure for doing this. The beginning of the *WdL* is too well known for that to be necessary, and hence only a short outline of Hegel's procedure is necessary. The opening concept must be: (1) a concept of being (since it is being that we talk about); (2) indeterminate, if it is to be without presuppositions and serve as the basis for explaining the determinateness of other concepts. The only concept which fulfils all these conditions would be the concept of pure being. It is undeterminate immediacy and equal only to itself ('*unbestimmten Unmittelbarkeit . . . sich selbst gleich*').⁹ This initial concept is something which is primitive, not susceptible to further analysis – a '*Nichtanalysierbares*',¹⁰ something which cannot be shown to have any more primitive predecessors. As the most primitive concept it is the presupposition of all other concepts. It is a concept free of any 'logic' which can be stated at the outset.

Such a concept is, however, logically equivalent to the concept of pure nothing. The concept of pure being is indeterminate and cannot therefore be distinguished from pure nothing, since only by virtue of some determination could it be distinguished from anything else. Taken in this form, the beginning exhibits a dilemma: two concepts which in their ordinary meaning simply do not mean the same are equated. Hegel claims that they have *passed over* into one another (he does not say that they *pass over* into one another, since he feels that such a statement would impute prematurely a 'logic' to them). This immediate passage of one into another is equivalent to the concept of becoming: the passage of being into nothing and of nothing into being ('"Becoming" denotes the "shiftiness", the "unsteadiness" of the concepts of pure being and pure nothing; "passing-over" (*Übergehen*) is the same as becoming'¹¹). The concept of becoming is thus the *unity* of being and nothing; that is, by enriching one's framework to include the concept of becoming, one can talk of being and nothing. The 'logic' of the initial concept, pure being, is therefore to have passed over into the concept of pure nothing. Yet nothing and being simply are not equivalent. The concept of becoming thus emerges as a solution to a primitive contradiction: without it one must hold the seemingly contradictory idea that being and nothing are the same. From the opening position, that is, one moves to a new position, i.e. a concept which is (1) more developed; (2) a solution to a dilemma, in this case a proto-contradiction. Within the concept of becoming, being is distinguished from nothing; it is thereby determinate being (*Dasein*). The initial 'logic' or construction rule thus emerges from the initial concept: in order to think intelligibly of the concept of being, one must think of it as determinate being – otherwise one must say being equals nothing. But since one must say this as long as one remains on the level of pure being, the inference or move to the concept of becoming

(the enrichment of the framework) is justified. The general principle thus emerges that the concept of being acquires determinateness through its incorporation into itself of the negative of itself. The inference to the negative of the concept of being is necessary for its determinateness. The first principle of construction is thereby generated.

The logic of the concepts of being and nothing, however, does not present the full set of the construction principles of the theory. From the concept of determinate being, Hegel reconstructs the concept of quality, then of reality, negation and so on. We need not follow the precise details of Hegel's procedure. What are of importance are the *types* of logical moves, i.e. the interpretative models which he introduces in the early sections of the *WdL*, specifically in the doctrine of qualitative being, since it is through the 'logic' of these preliminary concepts that the other 'logics' are to be constructed. Negation is the basic vehicle for this construction, and thus the section of qualitative being presents the basic moves of negation itself, these being generated by the antecedent of negation, namely, pure nothing. The logic of negation is therefore the logic of determinateness. The procedure goes through a series of stages and is brought to its closure in the notion of being-for-self (*Fürsichsein*). Being-for-self is the concept of an ideality which 'explains' the compatibility of two seemingly contradictory notions, viz. the potential infinite (what Hegel calls the 'bad infinite') and the actual infinite (what he calls the 'affirmative infinite'). The potential infinite is the 'infinite progress', i.e. the infinite whih, in Aristotle's characterization, is when 'one thing is always being taken after another, and each thing that is taken is always finite, but always different'.¹² The actual infinite is thus the ideality of the potential infinite. The first great categorial opposition is thereby rendered compatible.

II

Having done this, Hegel reconstructs the other two basic concepts of the doctrine of being, viz. quantity and measure, then begins a new logic, that of terms belonging to the family of concepts which he subsumes under the general heading of essence. In the logic of being entities are characterized as, for example, qualitatively or quantitatively different. The concepts of essence-logic however, cannot be characterized in the terms of the logic of being. An essence and that of which it is an essence are not two entities standing side by side; each is ingredient in and relevant to the determinateness of the other. The logic of essence is that of concepts expressing types of substructure–superstructure relationships.

The two sections of Hegel's *WdL*, the doctrine of being and doctrine of essence, comprise what Hegel calls the *objective* logic, which he partially

identifies with Kant's *transcendental* logic and classical metaphysics. The objective logic is then a general ontology, a treatment of the *a priori* determinations of being. Nothing, that is, except a purely categorical, conceptual analysis has been offered.

The reason why Hegel's *WdL* does not end with the sections on being and essence is that once an account of 'things' has been offered, the Hegelian desire for completeness of explanation demands an account of the account: *conceptuality* itself has to be understood. If the logic of concepts of *objects* has been given, then the theory is now required to complete the explanation through a logic of the logic, a meta-logic, so to speak. If thought has moved through all the 'positions' regarding the categories of objects, then it must also – for the sake of the completeness of the explanation – provide an account of how it is that it can establish or grasp the categories which it has thus far laid out. The section of the *WdL* called 'The Concept' is meant to do just that. It is intended to provide an answer to a 'transcendental' question: what are the logical conditions of the possibility of thought's having established the categories that it so far has, i.e. what are the conditions of the possibility of thought's comprehending objective categories? Just as the first two sections, being and essence, provided the conditions of the possibility for thought of objects, the section on the concept is meant to establish the conditions of the possibility for thinking about the first two sections.

Hegel's account of conceptuality is an attempt to explain how what has come before has indeed 'come about' and thereby to *justify* what has come before, i.e. the logic of being and essence. *Concepts* of being and essence have been given, but the desire for completeness of explanation now demands that we be told what *concepts* are. The logic of conceptuality is thus a 'successor logic' to the logic of being and essence; the determinateness of the concept of conceptuality (the concept of the concept, as Hegel calls it) is then in part constituted by the logic of being and essence:

Being and essence are the moments of its *becoming* (*Werdens*); it, however, is their foundation (*Grundlage*) and *truth* as the identity in which they are submerged and contained. They are contained in it because it is their result, but no longer as *being* and as *essence*; they have these determinations only in so far as they have not yet gone back into this their unity.¹³

Whereas the specific *concepts* of the doctrine of being and essence are no longer present, the *logic*, the network of principles which make up these concepts, is. In Hegelian terms, the logic of conceptuality is their 'truth' in so far as it establishes the basis from which the first two sections were done, that is completes the explanation.

This is not the only reason, however, which Hegel gives for this transition to 'The Concept': he also thinks that a more 'purely' logical transition can be made from the 'Doctrine of Essence' to the 'Doctrine of the Concept'. In outline, this transition may be put in the following way. At the end of 'Essence', the conceptual development has arrived at the concept of reciprocal causality (*Wechselwirkung*). This would be the notion of a causal system (of apparently the type which would nowadays be called a 'negative feedback' system) for which the logical models of the 'Doctrine of Essence' are inappropriate. The basic logical model in that part of the *WdL* was that of a substructure-superstructure relationship, but in the notion of a self-moving system (as, for example, a negative feedback system is), there is no 'substructure' nor 'superstructure'; hence, the conceptual machinery of 'Essence' is unable to describe this adequately. This much would be legitimate – viz. that systems-concepts are not articulable within the language of essence-concepts – but Hegel makes an illegitimate leap from the notion of a self-contained system of reciprocal causation to the notion of self-contained system of inference and identifies the two. But unless the inferential relation between propositions is assimilated to the relations of cause and effect, that move is clearly invalid. Hegel might be saying that one cannot with the conceptual models of 'being' and 'essence' account for certain kinds of things like inferences. Unfortunately, that requires reading into the text more than what he says. Therefore, the legitimacy of the transition seems to be simply the need for a fuller explanation.

What, then, is the logic of conceptuality? Metalogically, we can see that a concept is an instance of being-for-self. In the doctrine of being the 'other' was not included; something was simply different from its 'other' – for example, two automobiles standing side by side do not include one another. In the doctrine of essence, there was partial inclusion, but each moment maintained an integrity, an independence on its own. The essence is not divorced from that of which it is the essence as two qualitative or quantitative entities are; the cause refers to its effect but is not identical with it, nor is the thing totally identical to the sum of its properties. But a concept is identical in all its instances. The logic of conceptuality is that certain concepts are 'centres' of determination; a universal is a 'centre' for the determination of its many instances. In the logic of conceptuality, the concept and its other are dialectically intertwined: each is a moment of the other; each is the determining 'other to the other'. Hegel describes this 'concept of the concept' in typical Hegelian fashion:

Each of them is the totality, each contains the determination of the other within itself, and for that reason these totalities are purely and simply *one*, as this unity is the diremption of itself into the free seeming

(*Schein*) of this doubleness (*Zweiheit*) . . . in that one is conceived and expressed, the other is immediately conceived and expressed in it.¹⁴

Ontologically expressed, a concept is that which ideally includes its other; this inclusion is to be understood in terms of Hegel's theory of determinateness: a concept is determinate only by virtue of its other, in this case, being and essence, the *a priori* determination of *objects*. In other words, concepts must be *of* being, and this 'of' must be understood as the 'of' of *intentionality*. In order to understand what a concept is, one must think of it in opposition to the categories of objects. Concepts and therefore thought (in so far as thought is conceptual) are in the fundamental sense intentionally *of* being. This Hegelian explanation of *conceptuality* should therefore be also an explanation of *intentionality*.

In this light, Hegel says the 'I' is 'the concept which has come into existence'.¹⁵ By this he apparently means that the ego has the type of unity which a conceptual structure does. The 'type of unity' which something has is its type of *self-identity*, its 'relation to self' (*Beziehung auf sich*). The self-identity is thus not that of, for example, a physical object (the kind of self-identity appropriate to 'being'), nor that of a substructure-superstructure relationship (that appropriate to 'essence') but that of a *self-positing system*. Hegel seems, that is, to be endorsing a non-substantial view of the identity of the ego. The unity of the self is not that of a *substance* but is an *ideal* unity.¹⁶ One cannot properly conceive of the self as a substance which 'has' thoughts as properties or in which thoughts 'inhere'.¹⁷ This latter type of substantial theory would be a paradigmatic use of presentational thought (*Vorstellungsdenken*); it would be the result of inferring from the claim, 'we are conscious of ourselves as self-identical beings' to the claim, 'we must therefore be able to *present* this self to our mind's eye'. But this would be an invalid move, as Kant showed in the 'Paralogisms': from 'x is identical over time', one cannot draw any inference as to the *nature* of that x which is identical. Melodies, physical objects, numbers are all self-identical entities, but not all of them are substances.

Presentational thought, moreover, has another more disastrous consequence for the conceptualization of the ego and the understanding of intentionality. To think of concepts as presentations (*Vorstellungen*) is to hypostatize them and thus ultimately to interpose them between the subject and the world. This would result in the classical empiricist doctrine of there being an intermediary of 'ideas' between the subject and reality. Hegel accuses Kant of falling into this error but of also having the insight necessary for working one's way out of this false picture. The most correct insight of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, says Hegel, lies in Kant's seeing 'the unity which constitutes the essence of the concept as the original synthetic unity of apperception, as the unity of: I think or self-conscious-

ness'.¹⁸ The subject, that is, is not a 'thing' which 'has' thoughts – it *thinks*. The ego which unifies consciousness should be characterized in terms of what it *does*, not in terms of being a substance of some sort. What the ego *is*, therefore, is stated by a description of what it does, viz. to be a self-positing system. If the subject is not a substance but a kind of activity, then the need for an intermediary (a set of 'ideas' or 'presentations') vanishes. To say that the ego is the concept may be taken, therefore, as simply the Hegelian way of saying that the ego is a *thinking* being, something that does something. Intentionality should not therefore be characterized in the classical empiricist way, viz. by looking for some relation (be it a causal one or one of resemblance) between 'ideas' and reality.

If the need for an intermediary vanishes, then the intentionality of thought will be explained on the model of the conceptual interpretation of the given. Intentionality, that is, is a *semantic* relation; the difference between consciousness and the world is the semantical difference between consciousness and the objects to which they 'refer', or the difference between intensions and their embodiment.¹⁹ *Intentionality*, that is, is explained by an explanation of *intensionality*. The categorial account of intentionality is thus not a doctrine of acts (as, say Husserl would have it) but a doctrine of the principles constitutive of a system of thought (i.e. *intensions*).²⁰ The first part of the logic of conceptuality then must be an account of logic itself, for logic forms the most basic network of principles which constitute thought. For that reason, Hegel also calls the first part of this section of the *WdL* 'Subjectivity'. Since the subject is defined by its doings (i.e. as a self-positing system), and these doings are conceptual thinkings, and conceptual thinkings are constituted by logic, then the 'logic' of subjectivity is the 'logic of logic' and not in any way psychology.²¹

Hegel makes this point clear in his critique of what he takes to be Kant's betrayal of the fundamental insight of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant mistakenly conflates an abstract principle (i.e. that of the principles of thought) with a particular existent, the I. But the principles of conceptuality should not be confused with that for which they provide the interpretative model: 'from that non-mental as well as this mental formation (*geistigen Gestalt*) of the concept, its logical form is independent'.²² The principles of conceptuality form the logical framework for the more phenomenological reconstruction of the *mind* as intentional, but the framework for the reconstruction should not be confused with what is reconstructed, viz. the mind as such. The intensional principles of the *WdL* only 'constitute the foundation and the internal simple framework (*Gerüste*) of the form of mind'.²³

In fact Hegel explicates cognition (*Erkennen*) as the subject's overcoming the brute 'otherness' of the object by bringing the given into a

coherent conceptual scheme. The world is known (in the sense of *Erkennen*) when it is redescribed in the terms of some appropriately consistent and coherent framework. The world is thereby brought into the 'orbit' of the subject. The 'of' of intentionality is thus interpreted as inclusion within a conceptual system. The subject is in that way essentially intentional: 'the I thinks something, itself or something else'.²⁴ Nevertheless, the charge of subjective idealism might still seem to be open for Hegel's system, for this interpretation might seem to reduce Hegel to a kind of Kantian after all. That this charge would be unfounded may be seen by looking at Hegel's construal of the categories necessary for an understanding of formal logic.

III

It was remarked earlier that the subject of Hegel's *WdL* was concepts, not things; moreover, these concepts were identified with *Sachen*, facts of a general sort or *categories*. This identity of *Sache* and *Begriff* (or category) is especially important for Hegel's understanding of formal logic, for it is here that he breaks with his tradition in an interesting way. It is also here that he stays with the tradition in a way which lends a general unintelligibility to his system.

In the tradition categories were generally conceived as highest genera, and one moved from a category (a generic notion) to the *individuals* which exemplified these categorial predicates by adding 'specific differences' to the category. But this rests on a certain assumption, rampant in traditional logic, that one moves up the ladder of generality by abstraction, i.e. the move from an individual to a species to a genus is simply one of increasing generality. The idea is, of course, roughly that one starts from an individual (Jones), abstracts from his particular characteristics to reach the concept, 'man', and from there by increasing abstraction one moves to concepts like living thing, spatio-temporal object, entity in general (the last one being, perhaps, the object of a formal ontology). What is wrong with this picture is a crucial disanalogy between *individuals* and all the other concepts. How does one move from an *individual* (Jones) to a *concept*, i.e. a classificatory expression (for example 'man')? In English at least, there is also the syntactical disanalogy of categorial concepts from other ones: from 'x is red', one can move to 'x is coloured', but not to 'x is a quality'. This raises thus the whole question of just what one is doing when one provides an ordering of categories: is one ordering entities or concepts?²⁵

Traditional predication theory attempted to answer some of the questions by distinguishing different ways in which predicates 'applied'. In the case of non-essential predication, the predicate was held to 'inhere' in

the subject (this was the explanation of the invalidity of: Jones is red; red is a colour; therefore, Jones is a colour). Essential predication was felt to constitute an identity of some sort between subject and predicate; the most ambiguous formulation of this was Locke's dictum that the predicate 'flows' from the subject. The failure of traditional predication theory, however, to solve this many problems lay in a charge which Frege made of it. Traditional theory, Frege claimed, did not distinguish two different kinds of predications: (1) individuals being subsumed under concepts; (2) concepts being subsumed under one another. That is, classical predication theory could not distinguish class membership from class inclusion. Instead, as the metaphor of the 'ladder of generality' (or Porphyry's tree) shows, all the kinds of predication were generally assimilated to the relation of concepts being subsumed under one another. This meant that the traditional theory of predication could not distinguish unit-classes from individuals.²⁶ If one does this, then one must hold that individuals *are* singular concepts. Traditional predication theory did not make this distinction, however, and was thus naturally pushed to saying that the copula must express some form of identity between individuals and their properties (Leibniz is the logical outcome of this development).

One might think that Hegel would be especially prone to this failure to distinguish individuals falling under concepts from concepts falling under one another, for Hegel's work is rampant with (and famous for) statements about the power of *der Begriff*. Oddly enough, however, this distinction is one which Hegel *did* make. He distinguishes at the beginning of the section on 'subjectivity' in *WdL* the universal *concept* from the particular *concept* from the *individual* (*das Einzelne*). In fact, those are even his chapter headings. In the section on 'the individual' (*das Einzelne*) Hegel begins with a section on 'individuality' (*die Einzelheit*). Individuality is the concept of a this-such, the unity of the universal and the particular concept. His discussion of the universal and the particular concept is largely metaphorical and couched in the terms of his architectonic. The universal concept is the 'reflection in self', and the particular concept is the 'reflection in others'.²⁷ Even more metaphorically put, the universal is the '*Schein nach innen*', and the particular is the '*Schein nach außen*',²⁸ Hegel may be taken to be saying that things are particular by virtue of certain characteristics that they have, but these characteristics are universals. Apparently, then, an ontology which had only the notions of particular and universal concepts would have to conceive of individuals as 'bundles of qualities'. But the notion of a *particular* would then be lost, i.e. our 'intuitions' about what individual things are would not be captured by such an ontology. The notion of individuality (*die Einzelheit*) is 'not only the return of the concept in itself but immediately its loss'.²⁹ *The individual* is categorically different from any set of descriptions, which are used to individuate it; it can, ultimately, only be 'pointed at'

('es ist aber nur Dieses, insofern es monstriert wird').³⁰ The individual is *not*, therefore, as a conventional idealist would have it, a bundle of concepts. Hegel then breaks with the logical tradition, in locating this ontological distinction at the basis of his doctrines of formal logic.

But he does stay with the tradition in holding that the copula expresses identity; however, he then distinguishes different forms of identity. In part, the notion of different kinds of identity is introduced to maintain the *ontological* distinction of individuals and concepts and the *logical* distinction of membership and inclusion. For example in the 'judgment of existence' (*Urteil des Daseins*), Hegel says the subject and predicate are externally related, and the judgment has the form, 'the individual is the universal' ('Das Einzelne ist das Allgemeine'). He calls this the 'judgment of inherence', one of the traditional ways of speaking of class membership.³¹ But the identity between the subject and predicate is weak. This notion of different kinds of identity gives rise to some of the more obscure sections of the *WdL*, thus easily fostering the suspicion that Hegel is doing something illicit. The important point is, however, that Hegel has made a *categorial* distinction of concepts of particulars from individuals, and takes this categorial distinction to be basis to an understanding of formal logic.

This is important for understanding the nature of Hegel's idealism. If Hegel were any kind of conventional idealist (i.e. if he held in some fashion that to 'be' is to be mental in some way), then one would expect him to identify individuals and concepts. Idealism for Hegel seems not to be so much a 'metaphysical' principle (i.e. that what is, is mental) as a principle of explanation: 'The idealism of philosophy is only that the finite is not to be accorded the status of a true existent. Every philosophy is essentially idealism or has it at least as its principle, and the question is only now far it is carried out.'³² In terms of the way in which Hegel has been interpreted in this paper, this would parse out to the threefold claim that (1) explanation in the Hegelian sense is systematic redescription; (2) apparent contradictions between categorial concepts (and, consequently, between competing categorial frameworks), may be resolved by a sufficient expansion and correct ordering of the categories; and (3) the complete explanation (i.e. systematic redescription) of things requires an explanation of how it is that thought can do the things it claims to have done, and this can be done only through an examination of the principles of conceptuality. If one wanted a 'slogan' for this, it might be that idealism (in the Hegelian sense) requires the third part of the *WdL*, viz., the 'Doctrine of the Concept'.

Nevertheless, qualms may remain among the suspicious that this is still not enough to clear Hegel of the charges of being some kind of indefensible idealist. Perhaps (we can imagine one of those suspicious of this reading saying) all of what has been said is true; nevertheless, Hegel

seems to turn into such an idealist at the end of the *WdL* in the section on the 'absolute idea'. What is that, the hypothetical objector might ask, except a doctrine of some form of metaphysical idealism, viz. that what 'is' is 'posited' by the absolute idea? To make this reading complete, therefore, this hypothetical objector's criticisms must be answered. An interpretation of that section consistent with this reading of Hegel's *WdL* must be given.

IV

The notion of the 'absolute idea', despite its highly metaphysical-sounding title, may be taken to be simply the 'meta-logic', so to speak, of the theory. Hegel says as much himself; near the beginning of the section on the absolute idea, he claims, 'what comes here for consideration is not a content but the universal in its form – i.e. the method'.³³ This absolute idea, that is, is not a specific concept but the whole logic of the concepts of being, essence and conceptuality. The 'moves' of the concepts (interpreted here through the analogy of the moves from one position to another in a game) are constitutive of the determinateness of the concepts in question, and hence it is natural that at the end of such a theory as the Hegelian one there would be a reflection on the types of moves that make up the theory. Again, Hegel says as much himself:

that which constitutes the method are the determinations of the concept itself and their relations which are not to be considered in their significance as determinations of the method.³⁴

In terms of the game analogy, the structure of the *WdL* can be seen in two ways: (1) in a static way – the collective arrangement of 'pieces' in the 'game', i.e. the collective positions of the concepts *vis-à-vis* one another. This way would be represented in a good table of contents; (2) in a dynamic way – the movement from one position to another. The absolute idea is the *WdL* taken in the dynamic way.

In fact, in the section on the absolute idea, Hegel talks of little outside of the method of the *WdL*, that is its dynamic. The method, so Hegel argues, must have three aspects to it. It must have a '*backwards-proceeding grounding of the beginning*' (what, following Kant, can be called a *regressive* aspect), a '*forwards proceeding further determination*'³⁵ (or what, again following Kant, can be called a *progressive* aspect), and a systemic or architectonical aspect (Hegel does not use the term 'architectonic', but there is a structure to this theory which may be so labelled). This systemic aspect provides the rationale for ordering the categories. One can distinguish, moreover, between the large-scale architectonic and

the small-scale architectonic. The large-scale architectonic concerns the passage from (1) 'non-inclusion' of concepts in one another, as is found in the doctrine of being (e.g. the notion of qualitative and quantitative difference) to (2) 'partial inclusion' of concepts in one another, as is found in the doctrine of essence (for example, substructure–superstructure relations) to (3) 'full inclusion' of concepts in one another, or totality structures, as is found in the doctrine of the concept. The small-scale architectonic, on the other hand, regulates the inferential patterns of concepts within each domain (i.e. being, essence and concept). Hegel characterizes the small-scale architectonic in the following way:

The abstract form of progression in being is an *other* and *passing-over* in an other, in essence an appearing (*Scheinen*) in opposites (*Entgegen-gesetzten*), in the concept the differentiatedness of the *individual* from *universality*, which is continuous as such in that which is differentiated from it and with it as *identity*.³⁶

(This passage may, incidentally, be taken as textual evidence of there being an architectonic in Hegel's theory; otherwise sceptics may see the use of the term 'architectonic' as an illegitimate grafting of Kantian philosophy on to the Hegelian system.)

This way of reading the absolute idea as simply the method of the *WdL* may not, of course, appear satisfactory to more traditional interpreters of Hegel, for it requires one more or less to excise certain passages as being best taken as metaphorical. A good case can, of course, be made for claiming that Hegel actually took the absolute idea to be not merely the method of the *WdL* but also some kind of metaphysical entity. *That* it can be so taken or that Hegel perhaps wanted it to be so taken is not in dispute here. What is being claimed is only that it *need not* be so taken – *despite* what Hegel himself might have thought. If the interpretation is correct, therefore, no charges of any form of indefensible idealism may be levelled at Hegel on the basis of what follows from his meta-theoretical reflections in that section. It is, of course, also being suggested that this way is the more fruitful way to read this section, since it makes the Hegelian theory perhaps more philosophically interesting (one could, incidentally, compare this to recent attempts to excise the rational core of Kant's philosophy from his doctrine of phenomena and noumena – *despite* what Kant thought).³⁷

V

Consideration of Hegel's general procedure and some of the specifics of the third book of the *WdL* thus free Hegel from many of the charges

which have constantly been made against him. The interpretation offered here also has the added value of bringing Hegel into the modern arena of thought and deprives him of the dubious title of champion of those who would like to contradict themselves. It at least opens up a new way of interpreting one of the most seminal and most obscure thinkers in modern philosophy.

Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969), p. 246 (hereafter *Enzyklopädie*).

2 *ibid.*, I, 5.

3 G. W. F. Hegel *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1971), Vol I, p. 18 (hereafter *WdL* I or II). All translations are my own.

4 *ibid.*, p. 19.

5 *ibid.*, p. 26.

6 *ibid.*, p. 30.

7 *ibid.*

8 This discussion, especially that concerning normative kinds, is adapted from Jay Rosenberg, *Linguistic Representation* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974). Cf. pp. 39–48.

9 *WdL*, I, p. 66.

10 *ibid.*, I, p. 60.

11 *ibid.*, I, p. 79. This notion of 'becoming' was suggested to me by Professor Klaus Hartmann.

12 Aristotle, *Physics*, III, 6, 206a, 25–30. Translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Baye in R. McKeon (ed.), *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 265. I have treated Hegel's conception of the infinite in more detail in 'Hegel's Philosophy of Mathematics', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

13 *WdL*, II, p. 213.

14 *ibid.*, II, p. 299.

15 *ibid.*, II, p. 220.

16 *ibid.*, I, pp. 145–6.

17 *ibid.*, II, p. 221.

18 *ibid.*

19 Intensions may be embodied in one of three ways; (1) particular intensions may exist, (2) universal intensions may be exemplified in particulars, (3) propositional intensions may obtain in states of affairs.

20 Cf. *WdL*, II, p. 224.

21 *ibid.*, II, cf. p. 223.

22 *ibid.*, II, p. 224.

23 *ibid.*

24 *ibid.*, II, p. 443.

25 Cf. W. Sellars, 'Toward a Theory of the Categories' in W. Sellars, *Studies in Philosophy and Its History* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), pp. 318–39.

26 For a discussion of modern and traditional predication theory and its relation to metaphysics see I. Angelelli, *Studies on Gottlob Frege and Traditional Philo-*

sophy (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1967). The discussion of this in this paper is heavily indebted to Angelelli's book.

27 *WdL*, II., p. 243.

28 *ibid.*

29 *ibid.*, I, p. 262.

30 *ibid.*, II, p. 263.

31 *ibid.*, II, p. 273.

32 *ibid.*, I, p. 145.

33 *ibid.*, II, p. 485.

34 *ibid.*, II, p. 487.

35 *ibid.*, II, p. 503.

36 *Enzyklopädie* S. 240.

37 I have treated the architectonic at greater length in 'The Logic of Hegel's *Logic*', in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 17 (1979), pp. 417–35.

Constitution and structure of self-identity: Kant's theory of apperception and Hegel's criticism

Klaus Düsing

The philosophy of modern times since Descartes starts from the principle of self-identity or from the principle of self-consciousness and develops different models of a theory of subjectivity. But, since the end of the nineteenth century, the concept and theory of self-consciousness and of the ego have been criticized from almost every side, though by quite different arguments. It is not always clear whether the critique specifically points to a concept of empirical self-consciousness, understood as self-referential subject of its experiences, or points to a concept of pure self-consciousness, conceived as subject of pure thinking of the logical rules and categories, or points to both of them. An objection to one of the concepts is not in general simply transferable to the other. Furthermore, a criticism of one of the historical theories in which one of these concepts has its place, even if convincing, is not necessarily valid for the other.

So Ernst Mach¹ – to indicate some of these objections – declares generally and without reference to a specific theory of subjectivity that the ego is irrecoverable. This is meant of the empirical as well as of the pure ego, because neither of them is to be found as simple fact in psychological descriptions. For the early Husserl, before he founded the transcendental phenomenology, an ego that glides over the psychical occurrences and ostensibly connects them cannot be proved; he thereby rejects a pure ego *a priori* as well as an empirical self-consciousness in so far as it goes beyond the totality of psychical events. In the same manner, William James criticizes the assumption of a pure ego, both in the transcendental sense Kant taught and in the substantial sense as Descartes advocated. James claims that the empirical ego is only a stream of consciousness in which different phases of psychical events have only a relative identity. He integrates this view into the theory of neutral monism, according to which consciousness is not an independent entity.

Later on, Bertrand Russell takes up James's neutral monism² and from

this standpoint criticizes especially Descartes's conception of the 'Ego cogito', which is a substance with an independent existence, and also the idea that thinking generally is performed only by an ego. Why should it be impossible to say 'it thinks' just as 'it rains here'? Russell here follows a reflection of James, as well as unknowingly an ingenious note by Lichtenberg in which the statement 'it thinks' is thought of in an analogy to 'it lightens'. Thinking here is understood as a temporal psychical occurrence that is to be stated empirically, and in this way the concept of an empirical ego is challenged by this impersonal formulation. *A fortiori* then, Russell rejects the notion of a pure ego *a priori*. More radically, Gilbert Ryle in his behaviouristic theory puts aside the ego as an independent entity, since, unlike James and Russell, he rejects the validity of introspection. Ryle, of course, attacks the Cartesian theory as well, which in his opinion introduced the myth of the mental world as a kind of second theatre with an existence opposed to and independent of the physical world. Mental performances are, as he stresses, of a higher order than physical ones because of their different logical type. But at the same time mental performances are dependent on preceding physical facts. So the ego, which is empirical, is self-consciousness only in the sense that reflection is of a higher order than simple representations and their contents. Therefore, it avoids itself again and again when it endeavours to comprehend itself as an object; it is said to be systematically elusive and finally inconceivable. This criticism rejects any kind of original self-representation of the ego.

A different sort of objections to the ego is to be found in what is called the ontological critique. Here the ego is rejected as the fundamental principle in modern philosophy because, as for Nicolai Hartmann,³ the general ontological sense of the categories of being is prior to the ego or because, as for the later Heidegger, the being and its history are prior to any attempt to give a foundation of knowledge and prior even to any attempt at a theory of subjectivity, which is itself a historical position. Still another critique is the Marxian objection according to which the doctrine of self-consciousness, especially of the pure ego *a priori*, is a hypostasis of the civil subject abstracted from the civil society and their contradictions.

The premises of these objections are rather divergent and in part incompatible with one another. One objection, however, is independent of these premises because it calls into question the logical possibility of the self-comprehension of the ego. It is developed as such by Henrich, but it is also contained in Ryle's thesis of the elusiveness of the ego and, in fact, is stated in a similar way much earlier already by Plotinus in connection with the possibility of thinking on thinking.⁴ According to this objection, self-representation of self-thinking already is to be presupposed for the performance of distinguishing and identifying in the self-represen-

tation of the ego; and, if this presupposed self-referential representation or thinking is to be thought as such, again it presupposes the same, and so forth in an infinite regression. This objection may be called an argument from infinite iteration, because it is always the same ego that wants to conceive itself, and for that each time must presuppose itself. The objection can also be formulated as an argument of circularity. Every theory of subjectivity has to take account of this argument. Contrary to the view of those who advocate it, in idealistic theories of subjectivity it is invalid.

In the other objections, the spectrum of differentiations in the concept of subjectivity represented by different theories is often not sufficiently taken into consideration. So, in the objections to Descartes's philosophy, understood as objections to the theory of subjectivity in general, the subsequent critiques and systematic developments of the Cartesian doctrine up to Kant are often neglected. The philosophical foundation and explanation of the internal structure of the pure, transcendental ego, which is the work of Kant, as well as the disclosure of gaps in this theory and the consequent amendment in Hegel's logic, are often unrecognized in modern critiques of the theory of subjectivity. Therefore, Kant's doctrine of pure apperception will be discussed here with regard both to the possibilities and to the deficiencies of the critical theory of subjectivity. Hegel's objections to Kant's theory will be considered in the light of further developments in the theory of subjectivity, which Kant did not complete. Also Hegel's deflecting speculative premises and his own speculative theory of subjectivity will be contrasted with the critical philosophy. If Kant's and Hegel's arguments are valid, then subsequent accounts on which the ego is denied will probably seem less striking.

I

Considering the overwhelming number of inquiries into this subject, research in Kant's theory of pure apperception might appear to be either superfluous or, for sceptics, without prospects. The Kantian theory, however, will be discussed here from a specific and somewhat novel perspective, that is from the point of dispositions, problems and gaps of a critical transcendental exposition of the internal structure of pure subjectivity and its constitution. The idealists, especially Fichte and Hegel, deal with these questions in their critique of Kant. Recent interpretations of this idealistic critique of Kant, some of which are to be mentioned later on, mostly proceed from a Fichtean or Hegelian position. Here, however, the arrangement of, and the problems for, Kant's theory will be outlined by scrutinizing his own explanation and by considering the evolution of his thought, independent of idealistic interpretations.

In neoKantianism, for instance, in Cohen's commentary, pure apperception is understood as the highest principle of the theory of knowledge and science; it is a principle that makes the use of general rules and thus objective knowledge possible.⁵ On the other hand, Heimsoeth stresses the close connection of pure apperception with personal existence. Similarly for Heidegger, pure apperception as a part of a traditional ontology is a concept of human existence, which constitutes modes of time as ontological determinations. Paton is not involved in these discussions between different neoKantian and ontological interpretations of Kant; he gives an internal commentary on Kant's theory of apperception. De Vleeschauwer proceeds in a similar way, while emphasizing the evolution of Kantian thought. Ebbinghaus and Reich save the sense of the metaphysical deduction of the categories and interpret the concept of pure apperception as a principle of logic and epistemology; they avoid the neoKantian circle of proceeding from experience as real knowledge to the conditions of its possibility but in which the same knowledge is considered. The critical analytic interpretations, especially those of Strawson and Bennett, hold that Kant's concept of an *a priori* synthetic unity of apperception with its pure synthesis *a priori* is meaningless. In an analogous manner, Hossenfelder systematically criticizes the Kantian theory of constitution in general and especially the doctrine of pure apperception and its synthesis. Dryer, however, in the historical framework of Kant's question whether scientific metaphysics is possible, outlines and determines the sense of the Kantian doctrine of judgment and pure self-consciousness. In a detailed, historically reconstructing analysis, Henrich designs a theoretical structure on the basis of Kant's explanations about apperception and synthesis. In the matter of which questions to pursue, this reconstruction is similar to our exposition. Kant in his formation of the doctrine of pure apperception, a doctrine that is significant for his whole philosophy, is seen here predominantly neither as an analytical theorist of experience nor as a rather cautious reserved metaphysician, but as an idealist within critical limits.

The proof of the ideality of space and time necessarily preceeds Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories, how and in which contexts objects are to be known by categories. Spatial and temporal intuitions as subjective representations must be combined in such a way that an object can be known. Object as such then is not given in intuition, nor indeed found at all, but is the product of a constitution by intellectual synthesis, which is according to Kant the origin of the idea of necessity in the connectedness of sensible intuitions. This connectedness only comes about by pure intellectual and spontaneous synthesis and synthetic unity. The performance of such a synthesis is thinking, and thinking and its action, which in itself is uniform and based on a guiding synthetic unity, are to be founded in pure apperception. So Kant gives a basis for pure thinking

that itself is fundamental, the basis of pure self-consciousness. A decisive step in the deduction of the categories, therefore, depends on Kant's theory of pure self-consciousness, at least on that part of this theory in which the constitution of objectivity is explained.

In Kant's view, intellectual synthesis of representations as well as its synthetic unity are attributed to pure apperception. These determinations, however, are not identical. The intellectual synthesis is an act of the spontaneity of thinking;⁶ the manifold of representations that are to be connected, of course, must be given; it is not produced in the act of synthesis. The synthesis further combines representations guided by a prospect of a unity of their various contents. So the unity of a topic is brought about by the synthesis of a given manifold. But the synthesis itself is possible only by the unity of consciousness,⁷ which guarantees the performance and the unity of the synthesis of representations. Kant has indicated a subordination of synthesis under synthetic unity within the pure consciousness as such. The basic unity of consciousness in Kant's thought is simplicity; for, if this unity were produced by collected disparate moments, the consciousness that is the constituting basis would not be united in itself and could not produce the primitive unity of a thought and of its intellectual content.

The connection between these concepts is only partly described or signified by Kant but is not expressly developed into a theory of subjectivity. Some ideas that are employed there are self-evident for him but not explained. So, for instance, not the awareness of the idea 'I think' or of the unity of the self in actual presence, but only the *possibility* of such a synthetic unity is necessary in Kant's view for the performance of the synthesis. Therefore, self-consciousness as such does not need to be present at certain psychical acts of representation; it is only necessary that it could be present. But, if it proves in a synthesis of representations, that this is impossible, these representations either are self-contradictory or at least are nothing for the self. Further, Kant in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which my research follows, more clearly than in the first one distinguishes between intellectual synthesis, which belongs to the understanding, and figurative synthesis, which belongs to the imagination. In the first edition, Kant occasionally claimed the imagination is the faculty of synthesis in general, but consistent metaphysical judgments, even if they do not establish knowledge, and pure practical knowledge both presuppose a pure intellectual synthesis without imagination.

Kant's identification, however, of pure synthesis with synthesis of understanding is in need of further reasons, for the synthesis of understanding, which brings about the logical unity in *theoretical* judgments, in the first place is only one kind of pure synthesis; there is also, for instance, a synthesis that produces the unity in aesthetic judgments. So

in this theory of Kant, which results from the goal of showing the objective reality of the categories, the meaning of the subject that performs that theoretical pure synthesis is limited from the outset. Second, the assumption of such a pure synthesis of understanding is not as unquestionable as Kant thought. But there are good reasons for it, if this consideration, which can only be outlined here, is taken into account, namely, that logical determinations and rules, presupposing their apodictic validity and hence their apriority, were valid in themselves, but unthinkable and unthought, provided that a pure synthesis of understanding is not accepted. The apodictic validity and apriority of logical rules are a premise that cannot be defended here. But, if it is right, these rules only can be valid if they are unthinkable and also thought. Something thinkable and thought without thinking would be only an arbitrary product of abstraction; but the thinking, the pure intellectual synthesis, employed here is not an empirical psychical occurrence; it is a pure mental act, a performance of pure spontaneity, which becomes a thought by correspondence with *a priori* logical rules. In Kant's view, a separated real existence is not to be ascribed to these *a priori* acts; they are only the ideal principles of the constitution of those psychical events that, unlike sense-perceptions or dreams, can be determined with some legitimacy as actually occurring acts of thinking.

Kant, moreover, assumes a *subject* of these pure *a priori* acts of thinking, the pure ego or self-consciousness, for first a pure act of thinking is performed spontaneously, so it cannot be conceived as effected by something else. Therefore, the Neoplatonic argument, that thinking is brought about by emanation from the one, as well as the theological argument, that it is an effect of God in the ego, are void. What is acting spontaneously, only by itself and so to speak autonomously, is nothing else than a subject of its own activity. So only such a subject is able to perform these spontaneous acts of thinking. Connections with the pure will of a moral person here are obvious, as Kant hints, but they are not developed on the basis of the unity of subjectivity.⁸ Second, an anonymous occurrence of pure thinking without an ego is likewise not possible because the logical unity of judgments that is constituted by intellectual synthesis must be comprehended as such as a necessary and valid one.⁹ So the thinking, which is the reflective consideration of the logical unity and of the unifying synthesis, refers to the thinking that establishes this intellectual synthesis, and it knows itself in both sorts of thinking, even though at different levels, as the same thinking. Hence, it is pure self-consciousness that knows its own synthesis as regular, that is aware of it as its own performance, and that, thus, as Kant hints, does think of itself.

This problem of the relation between synthetic unity and thinking self-reference of pure self-consciousness also is the basis of Kant's account of the relation between synthetic and analytic unity of apperception.¹⁰

Representations do not already belong to the unity of self-consciousness in that each single representation, as clear and distinguished from others, itself is perceived with consciousness; but one has to be added to other representations, and so a connection among them must be brought about. Such a synthesis gets to be a uniform action in itself only by the synthetic unity of apperception. Contents of representations, for instance, that successively come into consciousness and that might be clear in themselves by regular synthesis are brought in a necessary connection of chronological order according to the unity that establishes the category of causality, and this unity itself is based on the synthetic unity of self-consciousness. The analytic unity of apperception, however, in Kant's view, is a certainty that the ego possesses in thinking of its own identity in various representations and in different phases of the synthesis of them. Thus, it is in virtue of this certainty that the ego is thinking of itself. But Kant is less interested in this meaning of the analytic unity that here proves to belong to a theory of subjectivity; he more considers the analytic unity in a fundamental epistemological sense. According to this sense, it is the basis of a tenor that remains one and the same in various representations; that means it is the basis of an analytic identity of a general concept.

These determinations of the analytic and synthetic unity belong to the structure of pure self-consciousness. Neither the act of pure synthesis that becomes uniform in itself by the guiding synthetic unity nor this unity itself is to be understood as an anonymous matter without any subject: they are to be ascribed to pure self-consciousness. So the self-consciousness must know the act as its own performance, the unity as its own unity, and its own unity in both of them. But Kant places the analytic unity of apperception behind the synthetic one, for, in his view, only by the synthesis of various representations and their synthetic unity can a consciousness of the identity of the ego within these synthesized representations and thus a thinking self-reference of the ego be achieved, or better – constituted. In this argument, however, there is no discussion of how it is possible that, without the analytic unity of self-identity knowing self-consciousness, the synthesis and the synthetic unity, which according to Kant precede the analytic unity, might be internal determinations of the pure self-consciousness that is to be defined by thinking self-reference. So Kant has broached the problem of structure and self-constitution of apperception in its synthesis and its thinking of itself. He has indicated a solution that, however, leaves undiscussed certain questions and that is not systematically developed in a general theory of subjectivity.

In the transcendental deduction of the categories, the structure of pure subjectivity is involved only in so far as the *objective reference* of the categories results from it. This objective reference is implied in the determinations of the unity of pure self-consciousness. By an intellectual synthesis under the guiding synthetic unity of apperception, the manifold of

given intuitions is brought into a regular or necessary connection. This connection, according to Kant's theory, already is the object in general that is constituted by the regular synthesis.¹¹ The idea of necessity in this connection, as well as of the regularity of the synthesis, is well founded as a logical unity in the conception of the synthetic unity of self-consciousness. Corresponding to the basic kinds of logical unity as thought in the forms of judgment, the necessary connection, which is produced within the given manifold by the synthesis of understanding, is differentiated in diverse kinds of logical unity as various determinations of intuition, that is in diverse categories, for the forms of logical unity in the functions of judgment and in the categories are identical. So, if a given manifold of intuitions belongs to the unity of self-consciousness, it is to be united and to be ordered in a way that is provided for by one of the logical functions of judgment conceived as a rule for the synthesis. Consequently, the first and decisive answer to the question how the categories might have objective validity reads as follows: categories refer to an object generally, because as unifying concepts they themselves together with the intellectual synthesis constitute the object as such. In this argument, the limitation of the objective reality of the categories is clearly implied, for the syntheses presuppose something to be synthesized, namely, the given manifold of sensible intuitions. So the categories are valid only for those sensible intuitions, but not beyond that region.

This argumentation is sufficient for the proof of the objective validity of the categories; but it leaves unresolved the basic question that belongs to a theory of subjectivity and that is raised by that argument, the question of how a necessary relation between thinking self-reference and constitution of an object might follow from the structure of pure self-consciousness. Whereas for Kant the constituted connection is the object in general, Hegel in discussing the subjectivity problem claims, as will be shown, that the constituted object is nothing else than the subject that is thought and that is thinking itself.

The constituted necessary connection, the object according to Kant's theory, is to be conceived as a topic of science. So the object is not a thing simply given in sense-perception and to be found in daily environment, but a regular unity of given intuitions, that means a space-time-content determined by rules or a law of nature.¹² This lawfulness in Kant's theory is marked in a special manner, it is principally a logical unity in judgments that determines the manifold intuitions. As has been mentioned, the logical unity in judgments according to Kant is the same one as in ontological determinations, i.e. in the categories. This idea forms the conception of Kant's 'metaphysical' deduction of the categories and is principally Aristotelian. Plato or Hegel generally do not establish fundamental ontological determinations with regard to the functions of judgment. But for Kant, as well as for Aristotle, the sense of being is to be

drawn primarily from the sense of judgment and its different functions. Therefore, in the light of the forms of judgment and their system, Kant is able to outline a system of categories or an ontology that is consistent but by itself falls short of knowledge. Indeed, the questions now arise whether the correspondence between particular forms of judgment and categories is to be carried out in detail and whether the forms of judgment are to be developed out of their principle, that is the synthetic unity of apperception. The idealists, and especially Hegel, argue that Kant has not explained such a systematic deduction of the plurality of the categories or of the forms of judgment from the unity of pure self-consciousness.¹³

Just as the object is not simply a sensible thing to be met in our everyday world, but a lawfully constituted and determined unity, so the basic pure self-consciousness is not a psychical ego that represents itself in the inner sense but is the principle of logical unity in general. Therefore, it is conceived as a principle of formal logic, and along with the forms of pure sensible intuitions as a principle of the transcendental logic. The often-discussed questions of the problem of immediate self-certainty of the ego feeling its own states or of the problem of an empirical ego that is separated from its psychical occurrences do not arise here. But the question does arise as to how the pure self-consciousness, which is the principle of logical unity as well as pure spontaneity of thinking and intellectual self-reference, is related to the empirical self-consciousness that exists in an individual person. The pure self-consciousness must be a basis for, and an ideal principle of, the constitution of thinking and intellectual self-reference as psychical acts, and so also of the intellectual performance that is an essential part of empirical self-knowledge.

This determination of the principle meaning of pure self-consciousness belongs to Kant's critical philosophy, in which theoretical knowledge, including self-knowledge, is limited. A pure intellectual knowledge of the existence of the pure self-consciousness *a priori* therefore is impossible. In reflections about the 1770s, on the other hand, Kant designs a theory of the ego, which can only be sketched here, in which such an *intellectual self-knowledge* is assumed. This theory is important not only as a precursor of the *Critique* but also as a document of an idealistic conception that later was developed by Fichte, although he was not aware of the earlier Kantian outline. In the lectures about metaphysics, edited by Poelitz, Kant affirms that the ego, the 'absolute subject' of all predications, is substantial, 'the only case in which we are able to have an immediate intuition of the substance'.¹⁴ This statement pertains to the systematic context of rational psychology in which the substantiality of the soul and thereby its immateriality was to be proved. The demonstration against the material composition and for the simplicity of the soul, according to a reflection of Kant, amounts to the point that the soul 'is an immediate intuition of itself by the absolute unity, the ego, which is the singular of

the actions of thinking'.¹⁵ As a kind of knowledge, this self-representation of the ego is such an intuition, which cannot be material or sensible. So he speaks in the *Träume eines Geistersehers* about the intellectual self-knowledge as an 'immaterial intuition' (*immaterielles Anschauen*). Here the Platonic background is clear: we have a pure spiritual intuition of the intellectual world in a pre-existence. And he adds with moderate scepticism that human beings are without reminiscence of this spiritual intuition. According to him, in the field of morality the supposition of a spiritual world and the idea that the subject is a member of it are allowed; concerning theoretical knowledge, however, Kant there abstains from judging, perhaps out of a consideration of Swedenborg. This holding back is not to be found in the mentioned reflections and lectures about metaphysics.

In these reflections, but in the different systematic context of the problem of freedom, Kant unambiguously assumes an intellectual intuition that the ego possesses of itself: 'The ego is an inexplicable idea. It is an intuition which is immutable.' We have 'a concept' of freedom and its reality 'by our intellectual inner intuition (not the inner sense) of our activity which can be moved by intellectual motives'.¹⁶ The theory of the early Fichte is closely connected with this Kantian conception. The ego immediately and intuitively is certain of its own spontaneous activity, but, since this certainty is not conditioned by senses or by receptivity, it is intellectual. In this way, the ego knows its own intellectual being that is determined by real freedom. The self-knowledge of the ego is immediate and intuitive because the ego, conceived as an absolute subject of all predicates that in itself is simple, cannot be a predicate and consequently cannot be a concept because furthermore, according to Kant, it is immediately accessible to itself in its real spontaneity and freedom. Therefore, in these reflections Kant adopts, as did Fichte later on, an intellectual self-intuition of the ego. In the *Critique*, however, Kant argues against such an intellectual self-intuition, for the self-consideration of the ego requires the presupposition that representations in accordance with the form of time are *given* in the inner sense as sensible receptivity. Hence, the possibility of intellectual self-intuition cannot be shown for this limited faculty of knowledge that is dependent on a given manifold. Therefore, the claimed insight into the intellectual existence of the ego and beyond it into the intellectual world is not to be justified. In his critical philosophy, Kant does not reject intellectual self-reference; it is, however, no longer an intellectual self-intuition, a kind of knowledge, but only a self-thinking without knowledge.¹⁷

In the *Opus postumum*, Kant, motivated probably by a vague information about the beginning idealistic discussion of the ego, stresses the self-reference of the thinking of pure apperception: 'The first act of the representative faculty is the consciousness of myself which is a mere

logical act basic for all other representations and by which the subject itself makes an object.¹⁸ The self-representation of the pure ego according to the critical philosophy continues to be a mere thinking. But now, in the ideal arrangement of conditions of knowledge, self-reference belongs expressly to the first act, which is a pure logical act of thinking. In these latest reflections, Kant distinguishes clearly between the objectification in which pure apperception makes itself an object by thinking of itself and the constitution of knowable objects. But even here Kant does not reach a developed theory of the internal structure of pure self-consciousness and of its relation to the constitution of objects of knowledge in general. Essential for his conception, however, is the view that the original act of apperception is not, as it is for Fichte, a deed-action (*Tathandlung*) that precedes the logic and is basic for a logical determination but that it is a pure act of thinking, an act determined by a logical unity. So pure apperception remains a principle of logic in Kant's later writings.

It remains, though, a problem in Kant of how in detail thinking self-reference of pure apperception as a principle of logic is to be determined. He finds this self-reference to be possible even in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. (We will return after this overview of previous history and the later development of the Kantian discussion of that question to the first *Critique*.) But here Kant declares that pure self-consciousness, being the subject of categories, cannot determine itself by the categories as an object, that is as a knowable existence, because it just is the principle of the kinds of logical unity that are thought in the categories. As the context confirms, Kant's opinion is here that self-consciousness cannot know itself in this way. But it can try merely to *think* of itself by categories, understood as kinds of logical unity. The thinking, however, which is the subject of the categorical thought founded on the pure ego and forming its moments, leads to a circle, according to Kant.¹⁹ From his earlier outline, mentioned above, Kant maintains in the *Critique* the view that the pure ego, being the absolute simple subject of all predicates, cannot be comprehended by predicates and consequently not by categories. But, because, in contrast to his earlier conception, an intellectual self-intuition is not available for it, its self-reference can only be a thinking of itself. The circle that Kant points out does not eliminate self-thinking; it is not a circle in the definition of thinking self-reference but only makes impossible any advancement of knowledge of it, so that Kant regards it as 'inconvenience'.

Here likewise the argument from an infinite iteration mentioned at the beginning is obvious: each time the ego intends to comprehend itself in categories, it must presuppose itself. In spite of this iterated presupposition, however, in Kant's view a thinking self-reference is not impossible, since the ego, each time it is presupposed, is in analytical identity with the categorical moments in which it thinks of itself. Kant here has in

mind the critique of metaphysics that pretends to know the substantiality of the soul. If the pure ego thinks itself to be substantial, simple, numerical one and so forth, it does not comprehend itself in ontological determinations but merely in the kinds of logical unity of its own thinking. Since it is not an existing individual, but general thinking established as the principle of logic, it conceives in thinking of this pure mental content a spontaneous intellectual activity that is united in itself and conformable to logical unity and more specifically conformable to the kinds of logical unity that are thought in the categories. The pure thinking ego that is thinking of this thinking does think of itself. According to Kantian theory, there is no problem to be found in the possibility of such a self-reference. Apart from the problem, however, of the development of the forms of judgments and of the categories out of the logical unity in general, it remains an open question how, within subjectivity, the content of it is to be constituted. By content is meant the mental or intentional object in which the pure ego is thinking of itself.

If the ego not only has thoughts but also has knowledge of itself, it must be presented to itself likewise in different intuitions that are always sensible for us. The thinking of the ego then is understood as a special psychical act that has to meet the general requirements of thinking as such but that is performed by a subject the existence of which is determinable in time. Kant discusses here Descartes's highest certainty according to which the ego during the performance of thinking is unshakeably certain of its own existence.²⁰ This certainty is not accepted by Kant, neither in the form of an intuitive knowledge nor in the form of a syllogism. Furthermore, the existence of ego, as Kant's critical doctrine shows, is not knowable as a simple substance from which immortality could be deduced. In his own theory, Kant splits up the highest Cartesian certainty into a pure 'I think' comprehended as a principle of logic without any knowledge of existence, on the one hand, and a psychical, not yet determined certainty or a still undetermined 'perception' (*Wahrnehmung*) of actual performances of thinking by which the ego acquires a certainty of its own existence determinable in time, on the other hand. This temporal existence of the ego will be determined and concretely known by time determinations that are enriched by empirical content in intuition. So, for instance, a year in the life of an ego and its phases are determined by the climatically and planetarily characterized course of a year in general and its special consequences in which the manifold of space intuition is included. It is to be added that for concrete self-knowledge of an empirical ego, understood as an individual person, self-conceiving as well as action within the inter-subjectivity of the spatio-temporal life-world are required. Kant, however, states only the general conditions of empirical self-knowledge and of the relation between the ideal determinations

of the pure ego and the real ones of the concrete empirical self-consciousness.

Despite many open questions, Kant makes the Cartesian 'Ego cogito' the subject of an original and to a certain extent well-developed theory. He substantially improves the exposition of the thinking ego and also changes the sense of it in his critical philosophy. For the first time, Kant raises in this context central problems in the theory of subjectivity. He determines the systematic place of the exposition of pure subjectivity considered as a principle of logic. And even with regard to the content the debate on the spontaneity of self-consciousness and on its self-reference is marked by this systematic conception. The circumstance that Kant in his theory does not or does not sufficiently resolve many questions, for instance, the questions concerning the constitution of self-reference or concerning the relation of the self-consciousness to the constitution of objects or its relation to the empirical self, on the one hand, is based on the novelty and unusualness of his investigations. On the other hand, these questions do not pertain necessarily to the theory of objective knowledge and its limits, the explanation of which is the proper task of the first 'Critique', and thus naturally receive less than complete treatment. But just those problems are developed by idealistic theories of subjectivity, which, however, radically alter the Kantian epistemological foundation.

II

These problems with the theory of pure subjectivity are further developed and brought to a special solution in idealism and especially in Hegelian idealism. Hegel maintains the Kantian view of pure self-consciousness as self-referential thinking. Fichte, and, following him, Schelling also treat these problems; they conclude, indeed, that the self-representation of the pure ego is an intellectual intuition. No judgment is made here on whether these theories withstand the critical arguments that led Kant to abandon a comparable theory of intellectual self-intuition that he had formulated and accepted earlier. However, they fall into systematic difficulties because they try to develop the immediate self-intuition of the pure ego and the constitution of objects within a separately established transcendental idealism; this idealism is thought to be a foundation for logic. In this account, logical determinations and laws are already presupposed as valid in the deduction and justification of them. Here arises a circle that, even when discovered, as it was by Fichte, remains vicious. Those difficulties can be avoided if pure subjectivity is explained not in a theory that precedes logic, but within logic itself, where it is conceived as a principle. This conception is connected with the view that for the pure

ego no self-intuition is available, only self-thinking. In that sense, we can say that Kant outlined this conception and that Hegel carried it out by means of a modification and a speculative interpretation.²¹

Hegel's critique of Kant is judged by interpreters who often are indebted to Hegel. Contemporaneous critiques of *Phenomenology* reproach Hegel for having established a new system without having sufficiently refuted the Kantian one. But Hegel scholars, for instance Rosenkranz, then adopt Hegel's standpoint in their own interpretations of Kant.²² The neo-Hegelian Kroner calls attention to the neglect of Hegelian philosophy in neo-Kantianism, but he understands the Kantian theory of apperception and of the synthesis *a priori* as a conception of the metaphysics of subjectivity. This theory is in his Hegelian view further developed in the idealism of Fichte and Schelling and is completed only by Hegel in a speculative idealism. The explanation of Kroner has a number of successors. So Marcuse and Günther accept the view that Hegel alone completes and perfects the idealistic philosophy. Marcuse starts from Dilthey's and Heidegger's philosophy and tries to show that the conception of vivid motion is the foundation of Hegel's critique of Kant. Günther points out that in his critique of knowledge Kant leaves traditional logic with its clear separation of subject and object as it is but that Hegel in his new metaphysical logic overcomes this separation dialectically. Rather closely connected with this Hegelian renaissance is Hyppolite's favourable explanation of Hegel's critique of Kant, especially as it is found in 'Glauben und Wissen'.

A series of recent investigations differ from this sort of interpretation. Hegel's interpretation of Kant is paralleled by the Heideggerian one by Henrich and van der Meulen, according to which both Hegel and Heidegger stress the idea of the original centre of the self interpreting apperception and imagination.²³ Van der Meulen's position is a metaphysical one, but Henrich's is critical in the Kantian sense in regard to the knowability of a basic power of the subject. Standing a certain critical distance from Hegel but starting from Marxian presuppositions, Merker interprets Hegel's Jena critique of Kant, namely, Hegel's speculative understanding of the antinomies and his speculative conception of pure apperception. Görland also regards critical deviations from Hegel's philosophy as necessary; and she endeavours to prove historically that Hegel, especially in the *Phenomenology*, emphasizes a Kantian theory of self-consciousness, a theory that was already interpreted and altered by Fichte. For Maluschke, Hegel's critique of Kant, particularly of his conceptions of apperception and imagination, can only be understood if Hegelian speculative premises are presupposed. But there are, of course, recent interpreters of the relation between Hegel and Kant who take Hegel's side of the disagreement. For example, we might mention Griffiss,²⁴ for whom Hegel surmounts the finitude of pure self-consciousness so that a logic, which is

dialectical as a whole, is possible; and J. E. Smith, who, although he does not accept several objections of Hegel to Kant, advocates the idea that the Hegelian metaphysics of reason overcomes Kant's theory. In a comparable manner, Petry holds that Hegel's critique of Kant's inconsistencies concerning the distinction and the relation between the logical and the psychological ego is valid. Rotenstreich finds in Kant's own fundamental motives still more evidence, but he agrees with Hegel's view in general. He delineates Hegel's criticism of Kant's argument against the substantial character of the thinking ego and also Hegel's sublation of the substance in the subject that is, conceived as self-referential spirit, the basis of ethical and religious life.²⁵ Favouring Hegel's theory in a similar way, Lugarini and Verra give an interpretation of the Hegelian critique of Kant; but they also notice that Kant's position is somewhat modified in Hegel's interpretation. Lugarini shows the development of the critique of Kant in Hegel's thought and highlights the speculative motives that Hegel sees in Kant's doctrine, for instance, regarding apperception. Verra analyses Hegel's interpretation and critique of the Kantian concepts of imagination and of intuitive understanding in the context of the intellectual climate of 1800, and he distinguishes Goethe's interpretation of intuitive understanding from the Hegelian one. There is also an interpretation, given by myself, of Hegel's critique of Kant with special regard to the problem of self-consciousness; this attempt is connected with a Kantian critique of metaphysics but brings to prominence the exemplary character of Hegel's theory of subjectivity.

Hegel's approval and critique as well as his interpretation, which is fundamental to this controversy, of the Kantian theory of pure apperception will be explained. It will be shown that Hegel's discussion of the Kantian theory is carried out not in an immanent way but on the basis of Hegel's own premises and that, however, some problems of subjectivity that Kant raised but did not solve are further developed and speculatively resolved by Hegel. Also, critical-idealistic alternatives that are opposed to those speculative solutions will be taken into consideration.

First, in 'Glauben und Wissen' (1802) the Kantian theory of apperception is reviewed by Hegel in detail and independently. Hegel in substance continues to adhere to the special arguments he urges here in his later critique of the philosophy of Kant, although his own systematic premises yet will change.

It is decisive for Hegel's critique of Kant that the possibility of scientific metaphysics, which Kant examines critically, is accepted without question. From the beginning of his Jena period (1801) he outlines a science of metaphysics, including complete knowledge of the absolute by pure reason. Therefore, Kant's theorems and proofs that refute such a view and lead to the limitations of our knowledge in the eyes of Hegel appear to be indecisive, inconsequential and invalid. From this the Hegelian

interpretation and change of the question of how synthetic judgments *a priori* are possible can be understood.²⁶ In his opinion, the idea of the *absolute identity* of contrary determinations is pointed to by those judgments in which subject and predicate, particular and universal, and even being and thought are united, provided that distinctions between them are maintained. Their principle, the absolute identity, in such judgments, which Hegel conceives as a partition, as an original division (*Ur-teilung* in acceptance of Hölderlin's etymology) and thus as the sphere of the finite consciousness, is present only in a state of predominant difference. Properly speaking, according to Hegel, the absolute identity as such is contained in the synthetic unity of apperception in its speculative sense. Although Kant distinguishes the meaning of 'synthetic' in synthetic judgments and in the synthetic unity of apperception because the latter is a principle of analytic judgments, too, Hegel conflates them and substitutes a very different one, i.e. the absolute identity. Also, apperception in Hegel's theory is a principle of judgment, not, however, in a logical but in a metaphysical sense; it is the absolute identity, which by dividing itself in itself produces the opposites of consciousness. Hegel understands the Kantian transcendental deduction of the categories as a proof of the absolute identity of subject and object by which their principle, pure apperception, is imprinted. Also, for him, it is identity of thought and intuition that, only by the disjunction and dividing action of reflection, are separated into the one-sided determinations of the empty ego or understanding, on the one hand, and of the given sensible intuitions, on the other. On Hegel's view, Kant falls back on the concept of the separating reflection in his systematic constructions and thus does not retain the original speculative comprehension of the principle of absolute identity, which he outlines in the concept of pure apperception. The same arguments, according to Hegel's explanation in 'Glauben und Wissen', apply to other fundamental Kantian concepts as, for instance, to the transcendental imagination or to the intuitive understanding; each of them is interpreted by Hegel as the original centre or the identity of extremes and is considered as the content proper of knowledge by reason. Accordingly, Hegel denies the unsystematic doctrine of faculties and its idea of a 'sack full of faculties'²⁷ established in the eighteenth century and extended by Kant and demands a systematic development of faculties and performances out of one principle just as before him Fichte and Schelling did in their programmes of a systematic history of self-consciousness.

The conception of knowledge of the absolute comprehended as the absolute identity, which is the premise of Hegel's interpretation and critique of Kant, follows in this period of Hegel's thought a Spinozistic theory of a single, all-embracing substance.²⁸ Pure self-consciousness as such and distinguished from absolute identity is for Hegel only one-sided

and finite; it must be sunk in its truth, in absolute substance. So his disagreement with Kant is most strikingly seen in Hegel's systematic programme of an idealistic metaphysics of substance.

Later on, Hegel abandons that metaphysic of substance in favour of a theory of absolute subjectivity. So the fundamental systematic premises of his critique of Kant had to change. The new view is basic to the *Phenomenology* of 1807. There, explanation of particular patterns of consciousness implies a critique of Kant, which must be omitted here, for in the first place Hegel 'idealizes' the philosophy of Kant in those patterns of consciousness and confounds it with the philosophy of Fichte, which he believes to be a consistent realization of the Kantian one. In the second place, only appearances of spirit are exhibited and shown to be untrue by concepts that are not part of Hegel's own doctrine of true knowledge but belong to the sphere of the appearance of spirit and to the transition from one mode of appearance to the following one, which likewise proves to be untrue. In this exposition, indeed, speculative-logical arguments are employed by Hegel that in part are incompatible with the Kantian theory. Therefore, the proper domain for the discussion between Hegel and Kant is the logic of truth.

Hegel, also in the *Science of Logic*, considers the synthetic unity of apperception as speculative, absolute identity; but this identity no longer has the anonymous meaning of an absolute substantial unity for him. Now it is an essential part of pure *subjectivity* in a speculative-logical sense, i.e. of the concept of self-thinking.²⁹ Hegel does not mean here a traditional discursive concept, which is only as a content of understanding an analytic unity of multifarious matters, but the concrete universal, which procures for itself in its own thinking its different, particular determinations and which thus is thinking of itself. In outlining this thought, Hegel refers to the Kantian concept of the synthetic unity of apperception that is for him the concept itself as concrete universal. He accepts and appropriates central Kantian ideas that belong to that synthetic unity, that is pure synthesis and its unity, simplicity in itself, intellectual spontaneity, and self-reference. So he adopts and promotes the Kantian theory of pure acts of thinking and of their fundamental condition, the thinking pure ego. Hegel's objection, however, that Kant falls into a 'psychological idealism' is unwarranted because these pure acts, as has been shown, are no psychical events or facts.³⁰ Furthermore, Hegel conceives the Kantian proof that the intellectual synthesis in accordance with logical unity constitutes objectivity is from the first an explanation of self-objectification of pure subjectivity that is self-referential thinking. Hence, the *object* for Hegel is not, as it is for Kant, a universal, lawful unity that is brought about in the synthesized manifold of intuitions, but the 'objective unity', which specifically is 'the identity of the ego with itself',³¹ that is, what is thought and known in pure self-thinking. So Hegel understands the

transcendental deduction of the categories as a demonstration of the possibility and reality of intellectual self-knowledge of the pure subject. This view is consistent neither with Kant's purpose in offering the proof nor with Kant's doctrine of the dependence of human knowledge on sensible intuitions. Intellectual self-reference, according to Kant, is, as has been explained, only pure self-thinking that can be performed merely on the basis of representations given in the inner sense and that is not already self-knowledge.

At the same time, however, Hegel raises a problem in his interpretation that Kant has left unresolved, the problem of the connection between intellectual self-reference and constitution of objectivity. This connection is to be clarified in a theory of subjectivity. Whereas Kant expressly distinguishes in his latest reflections between the object that is the content that the pure ego thinks in self-thinking, on the one hand, and the knowable object given in intuitions, on the other hand, the specific character of Hegel's speculative-idealistic theory of the constitution of objectivity is to be found in the conception of the identity of the two of them. So Hegel develops in a speculative-idealistic way a problem that belongs essentially to a theory of subjectivity.

The pure ego, which is self-objectifying and thereby self-knowing, according to Hegel, is not dependent on a given manifold of representations; on the contrary, it *produces* the manifold as a content of its thinking and self-knowledge. In Hegel's view, this manifold consists first in the determinations that belong to the pure concept or to the pure subject itself. The idea of a pure subject that produces its own manifold may be made clear by considering its background, which is the Hegelian speculative doctrine of the sublation of the *substance* in the *subject*.³² Following Spinoza, Hegel introduces the single and universal substance as a category, and this proves to be pure actual activity and absolute power in the creation and destruction of its own determinations. But this activity and power as such are present in a simple and unchecked way. According to Hegel, they are merely a positively subsisting identity that lacks negation. The sublation of this one-sidedness and thereby of the substance is to be achieved by the development of a negativity that must be immanent in the identity of the all-embracing substance and that consequently cannot refer to other things but only to itself. So the actual activity becomes an intellectual spontaneity that is distinguished in itself by that negative self-reference and that thus produces different determinations of itself while, however, at the same time retaining its self-identity. In this way, the self-thinking of the pure subject or of the concept considering itself in its own determinations is brought about.³³ It contains the substance that traditionally is the primary being in a sublated mode in itself; it is the substance that has become subject.

Since Kant cannot assign to his doctrine of pure apperception that

metaphysical sense and the metaphysically founded thesis of the production of the manifold, his philosophy is criticized by Hegel as a theory of mere understanding that separates the ego from the manifold of intuitions. In Hegel's view, Kant has not reflected on the circumstance that the proof of the finitude of knowledge is attained only by finite knowledge and, therefore, cannot require absolute truth. Kant, however, is alive to the difference between the knowledge of objects and the transcendental reflection on possibilities and limits of such a knowledge, for the theory of the limitation of knowledge is a reflective one and is not a knowledge of objective appearances, still less a knowledge of things in themselves, i.e. of absolute truth as Hegel insinuates it in his objection.

The pure subjectivity, conceived as a pure concept in Hegel's theory, is thus the foundation of its own determinations produced by itself. So Hegel reproaches Kant for not having derived the different logical forms and categories from the unity of 'I think', which, therefore, becomes a void identity.³⁴ In fact, Kant did not explain this derivation in his published works: he did, however, outline it in reflections and letters but still not in a fashion that fits the Hegelian scheme of generation. On the other hand, in Hegel's view the Kantian account of the relation between the thinking self-reference of the ego and the categories is insufficient; Kant speaks of an 'inconvenience' and of a 'circle' in self-representation by categories. Hegel violently criticizes these formulations, since he believes that Kant holds that the circle is a 'fallacy' and that he, therefore, tries to abstract from the thinking self-reference in the 'I think'. Certainly, Hegel considers the connection between those Kantian statements and the critique of the metaphysics of the soul regarded as a substance. But in Hegel's opinion Kant here is only criticizing an abstract theory that is traditional metaphysics that establishes virtually abstract relational determinations as ontological predicates of the soul, by his own theory that is even more abstract. According to it, the ego is the mere subject of thoughts and cannot be determined by predicates at all. The Kantian explanation that the ego cannot be known by pure thinking because it lacks the manifold of intuitions is conceived by Hegel quite without scrutinizing Kant's own reasons for it, as a separation of the subject from the object and as a retention of the subject in mere abstraction even without thinking self-reference. So, in Hegel's eyes, in Kant's theory the concrete nature of the concept and of the pure ego is absent altogether, for it is to be defined by thinking self-reference, i.e. by intellectual self-objectification, which includes a distinction of the ego in itself, and by self-identification of the ego with itself in those separate moments. So the ego spontaneously produces a plurality of its own determinations in which it knows itself. This self-objectification and self-reference that is a polemical formulation of Kant's view, to be sure, is for Hegel the 'circle'. In Kant's view, the circle understood as a circle in a metaphysical proof

makes impossible, as has been shown, any progress of knowledge but does not make pure self-thinking impossible. The ego, which is a logical unity in general in the categories, qua kind of logical unity, thinks of itself. For Hegel, however, the 'circle' signifies just the concrete thinking self-reference of the pure ego, which, in the plurality of its own determinations, knows itself as its object and comprehends itself as concept or concrete universal. This 'circle', the self-objectification and self-knowledge of the ego, is to be distinguished from the circle as Kant explains it and cannot, on pain of being judged frivolous by classical logic, be regarded as a circle in a proof. A systematic exposition shows that it is not such a logical circle.

In fact, Hegel avoids the logical circle as well as the finite regress in his own doctrine of the constitution of thinking and knowing self-reference of the pure ego. The immediate unity of the concept or subject in itself does not arise for Hegel from the concept already unfolded but from a development of simple determinations of being and of determinations of relation, specifically of the substance becoming in itself a negative and self-referential entity. His conception of the further development of this immediate self-reference into mediated self-thinking is indicated in the context of his discussion of Kant. The concept is 'the absolute relation to itself . . . which as a dividing judgment makes itself its own object'.³⁵ 'Judgment' here means original division of the unity of the concept into separated conceptual determinations as well as the logical function of statements that differentiates itself systematically into diverse functions. The content of a judgment with respect to the roles of 'subject' and 'predicate' is important in speculative logic; it is determined *a priori* since it consists in diverse conceptual determinations, for instance, 'The individual is universal.' Because these determinations in judgment are other for one another and because each of them represents the concept itself, the concept here is 'object' for itself: i.e. it contrasts with itself in a judgment, being an independent otherness in itself and for itself. So conceptual self-reference, which at first was only immediate, is developed by its self-objectification in a judgment.³⁶ Since the identity of the concept that is divided into its diverse determinations in a judgment is only expressed by a simple copula that is empty of conceptual meaning, the concept or the pure subject comprehends itself sufficiently only in a cupola enriched by the concept itself. This act of comprehension takes place, according to Hegel, in a syllogism³⁷ in which the conclusion is mediated by a concept or two different conceptual determinations are connected by a third mediating one. If the middle term is no longer a third determination separated from the other two but represents their original unity and thus a concrete universal, as Hegel teaches, then it is the objectivity by which the pure subjectivity knows itself, or it is the developed subjectivity itself as the known content of its self-knowing.

Whether Hegel succeeds in carrying out this programme convincingly may be left an open question. But in this way he does avoid the logical circle in a proof, because the subjectivity from which the argument starts is the immediate and undeveloped unity of the concept, and this is not iterated in the speculative syllogism. Similarly, he also avoids the infinite iteration or regress, since the developed self-thinking ego is not presupposed in the mediated intellectual self-reference achieved in the syllogism. There are only more simple moments or constitutive principles, i.e. the spontaneity of thinking in general, the self-division, and the production of a conceptual unity of the separated determinations of the concept. Therefore, the developed self-referential ego does not precede the developed thinking self-reference. The same argument is valid for the avoidance of a circle in the definition of self-representation, which circle is only a different formulation of the infinite regress objection. Such a circle in the definition, according to which, in the determination of the self-representation of the ego, the ego, or its conceptual equivalents, is presupposed is likewise avoided by the speculative-logical development of subjectivity.³⁸

In spite of Hegel's rather violent critique of Kant, they both unanimously accept the fundamental systematic importance of pure apperception or pure subjectivity in a specific sense. They both think it is the *principle of logic*, the meaning and the relevance of which for the systematic explanation of logical determinations come to evidence within this logic itself. So the difficulties do not arise into which Fichte and Schelling fall trying to explain the principle of subjectivity as pre-logical and as foundation of the logic in a separate theory of transcendental idealism. In Kant, the pure apperception is the principle of the forms of judgment and, furthermore, of formal logic; it is also the principle, aside from that of the pure sensible intuition, of transcendental logic in its positive part, that is, in the part that is fundamental to knowledge. In Hegel, however, the pure subjectivity comprehended as the concept is a sufficient principle of a systematic explanation of speculative subjective logic, specifically of the forms and contents *a priori* of conceptual determinations, of judgments and syllogisms, for this manifold of determinations and relations is constituted by subjectivity that in thinking of them thinks of itself. But this self-constitution is completed only in an exposition of an adequate concept that is for Hegel in the idea. So pure subjectivity conceived as the foundation of a systematic explanation of logical determinations in its complex structure is itself developed in the course of subjective logic obtaining more and more pregnant determinations. It is for Hegel, however, not only the principle of the subjective, but also the principle of the entire logic. The previous categories of objective logic, i.e. the simple determinations of being and the determinations of relation, are only less complex elements of constitution from which the more complex concept

of thinking self-reference and of the pure subject arises. So speculative logic as such becomes even in its ontological meaning a theory first of pure and then finally of absolute subjectivity.

Pure subjectivity for Hegel as well as for Kant is systematically the principle of logic. But the meaning of logic and the relation between subjectivity and special logical determinations is comprehended by each of them in a different way. Hegel likewise accepts as necessary the Kantian assumption of pure acts of thinking and of a reflection of the thinking subject upon them or of the self-reference of the pure ego. His critique of the Kantian theory of pure apperception, as has been shown, is mainly not immanent; it starts from speculative premises in which scientific metaphysics is accepted, the possibility of which was exactly Kant's burning question. It uncovers, however, gaps in the Kantian theory that Hegel fills in with his own logic, for instance, the systematic development of logical determinations out of the principle of subjectivity or the connection of thinking self-reference with the constitution of objects, understood as self-objectification of the pure ego. Furthermore, in his interpretation of the Kantian problem of the circular proof for pure intellectual self-knowledge, Hegel effectively weakens the objection of an infinite iteration and regress that otherwise would make self-representation incomprehensible. Kant, after having abandoned his earlier, more pretentious conception of self-knowledge as intellectual self-intuition, sticks to the possibility of self-thinking; but Hegel's theory is developed further in its arguments against that objection. Moreover, the objections raised to the substantiality of the Cartesian 'Ego cogito' are not valid for the Kantian but also not valid for the Hegelian theory, for even in Hegel's view the self-thinking of the concept is not substantiality, but freedom. The Hegelian speculative logic is indeed metaphysics; more exactly, it is an ontology and an ontotheology of the absolute subjectivity. Therefore, in diverging from the Kantian conception, for instance, the pure acts of thinking in which the subjectivity determines itself, Hegel's account takes on ontological meaning. It may be doubted whether this metaphysics, as opposed to the Kantian critique of metaphysics, can be maintained.³⁹ But some fundamental insights of Hegel into systematic requirements of a theory of subjectivity are independent of his metaphysics, for instance, the idea of pure, self-thinking subjectivity as the principle of logic and of its rules and categories, the systematic explanation of logical determinations in general based on subjectivity as their principle, and the exposition of the genesis of its self-objectification and self-identification and with that the avoidance of an infinite iteration by the constitution of pure subjectivity out of more simple elements and as the result of this development. But it must be guaranteed that the logical rules and categories are valid *a priori*, that their being thought and that thus the ideal but not real pure acts of thinking necessarily are assumed. Finally, it must

be guaranteed that these acts are based on self-thinking, pure subjectivity understood as their ideal principle. In view of the prevalence and, in some quarters, dominance of empiricism in contemporary philosophy, the idea that such a conception, which encompasses both the conditions of scientific thought and of scientific experience, is neither impossible nor meaningless might be recommended for fundamental serious consideration.

Notes

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1 Cf. E. Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen*, 6th edn (Jena: Fischer, 1911), 18 ff.; see for the following E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900/1901), Vol. 2, pp. 325–42; W. James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1890), Vol. 1, 329ff.; W. James, 'Does Consciousness Exist?', in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, 2nd edn (New York: Longmans, Green & Company, 1922), 1ff.

2 Cf. B. Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, 10th edn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), 9ff.; B. Russell, *An Outline of Philosophy*, 8th edn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1961), 218ff. See for the following J. Chr. Lichtenberg, *Aphorismen*, ed. A. Leitzmann, Vol. 5 (Berlin: Behr, 1908), p. 128; Vol 3 (Berlin: Behr, 1906), 7ff.; G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (first published 1949; London: Penguin Books, 1968), 186ff.

3 Cf. for instance, N. Hartmann, *Der Aufbau der realen Welt*, 2nd edn (Meisenheim, a.G.: Hain, 1949), 5ff., 512ff.; see for the following M. Heidegger's discussion of the philosophy of Hegel: 'Die ontotheologische Verfassung der Metaphysik', in *Identität und Differenz*, 4th edn (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), pp. 31–67; see furthermore for the Marxian critique, for instance, Th. W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956), 196ff.

4 Cf. D. Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1967). Cf. Plotinus, *Enneades*, 11, 9, 1, 55ff.

5 Cf., for instance, H. Cohen, *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung*, 3rd edn (Berlin: Cassirer, 1918), 393ff.; H. Heimsoeth, 'Personlichkeitsbewußtsein und Ding an sich in der Kantischen Philosophie' (first published in 1924), in *Studien zur Philosophie I. Kants, Kant-Studien*, supplementary Vol. 71 (Cologne: Universitäts-Verlag, 1956), pp. 227–57; M. Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1951), 76ff., 134ff., 171ff.; and Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 25 (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1977), 386ff.; H. J. Paton, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*, 5th edn (first published in 1936; London and New York: Allen & Unwin and Humanities Press, 1970), Vol. 1, 396ff., 503ff.; H. J. de Vleeschauwer, *La Déduction transcendante dans l'oeuvre de Kant* 3 vols. (Antwerp: De Sikkels, 1934–7); J. Ebbinghaus, *Kantinterpretation und Kritik* (first 1924), in *Gesammelte Aufsätze, Vorträge und Reden* (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 1–23; K. Reich, *Die Vollständigkeit der Kantischen Urteilsafel* (first 1932; 2nd edn, Berlin: Schoetz, 1948), 25 ff.; P. F.

Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (first 1966, 3rd edn, London: Methuen, 1973), 93ff.; J. Bennett, *Kant's Analytic* (first 1966, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 100ff.; M. Hossenfelder, *Kants Konstitutionstheorie und die transzendente Deduktion* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1978), 96ff.; D. P. Dryer, *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), 117ff.; D. Henrich, *Identität und Objektivität: Eine Untersuchung über Kants transzendente Deduktion* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1976), pp. 54–112. For further interpretations, cf. the general view of V. Gerhardt and F. Kaulbach, *Kant* (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1979).

6 Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 129ff (§15); cf. the commentary on this passage by Paton, *Kant's Metaphysics of Experience*, Vol. 1, 503ff.; cf. also D. Henrich, *Identität und Objektivität*, 55ff. See furthermore here and for the following K. Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 'Ontologie und Dialektik in Antike und Neuzeit', chapter 3, section II on Kant (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1983).

7 For Kant, *Einheit des Selbstbewußtseins* often has two meanings: 'unity', understood as a whole of various representations united in itself, and 'identity', conceived as sameness in the manifold of representations. Here both of them are meant. See the explanations below about Kant's own analogous distinction between synthetic and analytic unity of apperception.

8 See, for these connections, Heimsoeth, 'Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein und Ding an sich in der Kantischen Philosophie', and I. Heidemann, 'Spontaneität und Zeitlichkeit: Ein Problem der Kritik der reinen Vernunft', *Kant-Studien*, supplementary Vol. 75 (Cologne: Universitäts-Verlag, 1958), pp. 185ff.; recently, N. Rotenstreich, *Theory and Practice in Kant and Hegel* (to be published in the proceedings of the Stuttgart Hegel Conference, 1981).

9 Cf. for this thought Dryer, *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics*, p. 121. See for the following *Critique of Pure Reason* B 158 'that I think myself' ('daß ich mich denke'), further B 135.

10 Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 133 ff. Paton notices this passage in his commentary; but he does not discuss the specific problem that lies in the relation between these determinations; cf. *Kant's Metaphysics of Experience*, Vol. 1, pp. 513ff. But cf. L. Lugarini, *La logica trascendentale kantiana* (Milan–Messina: Principato, 1950), pp. 183ff., and K. Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik: Systematische und entwicklungsgehistorische Untersuchungen zum Prinzip des Idealismus und zur Dialektik', *Hegel-Studien*, supplementary Vol. 15 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1976), pp. 237ff.

11 Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*. B 137ff.

12 That *Objekt* for Kant very often has the meaning of regular unity or of law in general is also to be drawn from his characterization of the moral law as an 'objective' practical law. Although he does not distinguish *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* terminologically, the moral law could not be designed as *gegenständlich*.

13 Although Kant has not explained a systematic deduction of the forms of judgment in his published works, he has designed it in reflections and letters, cf. Reich, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*.

14 I. Kant, *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik*, ed. by C. H. L. Poelitz (Erfurt, 1821; reprint, Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1964), p. 133: 'der einzige Fall, wo wir die Substanz unmittelbar anschauen können'. Cf. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the Prussian Academy of Sciences, Vol. XXVIII/1, 266. See for those thoughts Heimsoeth, *Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein und Ding an sich*, pp. 232ff.

15 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, XVII, 470 (reflection 4234): 'daß sie [die Seele] eine unmittelbare Anschauung seiner [!] selbst durch die absolute Einheit *Ich* sei,

welcher der singularis der Handlungen des Denkens ist.' For the following cf. II, 337.

16 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, XVII, 465 (reflection 4225): 'Das Ich ist eine unerklärliche Vorstellung. Sie ist eine Anschauung, die unwandelbar ist'; XVII, 509 (reflection 4336): 'einen Begriff . . . durch unser intellektuelles inneres Anschauen (nicht den inneren Sinn) unserer Tätigkeit, welche durch motiva intellectalia bewegt werden kann'. Cf. also Kant's formulation 'Anschauung der Selbsttätigkeit zu möglichen Wirkungen' (XVII, 509, reflection 4334).

17 A remnant of the earlier conception apparently is to be found in the formulation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the solution of the third antinomy (B 574): 'The human being . . . knows itself by mere apperception too' (Der Mensch . . . erkennt sich selbst auch durch bloße Apperzeption').

18 *Kants gesammelte Schriften* XXII, 77: 'Der erste Akt des Vorstellungsvermögens ist das Bewußtsein meiner selbst, welches ein bloß logischer Akt ist, der aller übrigen Vorstellung zum Grunde liegt, wodurch das Subjekt sich selbst zum Objekte macht'; cf. also op. cit., pp. 89, 98.

19 Cf. *Critique of Reason* B 422 and 404. Passages of such a kind have become a starting point of various discussions and theories. Hegel criticizes Kant vehemently, as will be shown. In neo-Kantianism, Cohen, Natorp or Rickert revert to those passages in order to develop their own theories. Natorp especially thinks such a circle makes the conception of self-objectification and self-reference of the ego impossible. He establishes his own theory, which starts from the inconceivability of the spontaneous ego. Kant's thesis of the circular metaphysical proof is changed here to the assertion that the definition of the self-referential ego is circular. In my opinion, this is a far-reaching misinterpretation that is followed by recent German expositions. A critical comment on Kant's explanation is to be found in J. Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 69ff.

20 Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 422ff. note. Cf., for instance, the critical interpretation in Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, pp. 66ff.; cf. also Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, pp. 162ff.

21 For these theses see Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität', pp. 120ff., also 141ff. and 20ff., 336ff.

22 Cf. K. Rosenkranz, *Geschichte der Kant'schen Philosophie* (Leipzig: Voss, 1840), especially pp. 10ff., 489. For the first critiques, cf. W. Bonsiepen, 'Erste zeitgenössische Rezensionen der Phänomenologie des Geistes', *Hegel-Studien* 14 (1979), pp. 9ff., cf. especially pp. 25, 27ff. Concerning the following cf. R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, 2 vols. (first published 1921/1924, 2nd edn, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1961); H. Marcuse, *Hegels Ontologie und die Grundlegung einer Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit* (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1932), especially pp. 18ff., 24ff., 132ff., 183ff.; G. Günther, *Grundzüge einer neuen Theorie des Denkens in Hegels Logik* (first published 1933, 2nd edn, Hamburg: Meiner, 1978), especially pp. 40ff., 104ff., 108ff., 147ff.; J. Hyppolite, 'La Critique hégélienne de la réflexion kantienne', *Kant-Studien* 45 (1953/4), pp. 83ff.

23 Cf. D. Henrich, 'Über die Einheit der Subjektivität', *Philosophische Rundschau* 3 (1955), pp. 28–69; J. van der Meulen, *Hegel: Die Gebrochene Mitte* (Hamburg: Meiner 1958), especially pp. 218ff., also 31ff., 168ff. Concerning the following, cf. N. Merker, *Le origini della logica hegeliana* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), especially pp. 218ff., I. Görland, *Die Kantkritik des jungen Hegel* (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1966); see also my review in *Hegel-Studien* 5 (1969), pp. 298ff.; G. Maluschke, 'Kritik und absolute Methode in Hegels Dialektik', *Hegel-Studien*, supplementary Vol. 13 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), especially pp. 82ff.

24 Cf. J. E. Griffiss, 'The Kantian Background of Hegel's Logic', *The New Scholasticism* 43 (1969), pp. 509–29; see for the following J. E. Smith, 'Hegel's Critique of Kant', in *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*, J. J. O'Malley, K. W. Algozin and F. G. Weiss, eds. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 109–28 (first published 1973); G. W. F. Hegel, *The Berlin Phenomenology*, ed. and trans. with an Introduction and explanatory notes, M. J. Petry (Dordrecht/Boston: Reidel, 1981), especially pp. XXff., XXXVIIff., XLIXff.

25 Cf. N. Rotenstreich, *From Substance to Subject: Studies in Hegel* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974); cf. also N. Rotenstreich, 'On Spirit: An Interpretation of Hegel', *Hegel-Studien* 15 (1980), pp. 199–240. With regard to the following, cf. L. Lugarini, 'La "Confutazione" hegeliana della filosofia critica', *Hegel interprete di Kant*, ed. V. Verra (Naples: Prismi, 1981), pp. 13–66; Verra, 'Immaginazione trascendentale e intelletto intuitivo', op. cit., pp. 67–89. See also Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität', pp. 109ff., 233ff., and with a review of the literature Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*.

26 Cf. here and in the following Hegel's discussion of the Kantian philosophy in 'Glauben und Wissen', *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968), pp. 326ff.

27 *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4, p. 237, cf. p. 329. Hegel maintains this critique later on; cf. for instance, *Encyclopaedia*, 3rd edn (Heidelberg: Winter, 1830), §445 note.

28 For Hegel's metaphysics of Spinozistic substance in his early Jena period established in common with Schelling, cf. K. Düsing, 'Idealistic Substanzmetaphysik: Probleme der Systementwicklung bei Schelling und Hegel in Jena', *Hegel in Jena, Hegel-Studien*, supplementary Vol. 20 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1980), pp. 25–44.

29 Cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, pp. 17ff. Concerning the difference between the traditional and the Hegelian doctrine of concept, cf. for instance, G. R. G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (first published 1950, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 159ff.

30 Cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, pp. 22ff.; cf. Vol. 4, 332.

31 *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, p. 18 ('welche objektive Einheit die Einheit des Ich mit sich selbst ist').

32 Cf. especially *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 11, pp. 394ff.; Vol 12, pp. 11ff. Cf. about this problem in general Rotenstreich, *From Substance to Subject* and specifically concerning the Hegelian argumentation also Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität', pp. 228ff., and Düsing, 'Idealistische Substanzmetaphysik', pp. 41ff. Walsh demonstrates in a similar context that Hegel does not accept the Kantian dualism of the sources of knowledge; cf. W. H. Walsh, 'Subjective and Objective Idealism' (to be published in the proceedings of the Hegel conference in Stuttgart, 1981).

33 This sketch may comprise the leading idea of Hegel in a longer series of arguments in which the categories are developed out of the substance via causality and reciprocity into the concept itself. Whether the special Hegelian argument concerning the deduction of thinking, which is self-thinking and therefore self-distinguishing and self-identifying, from categories of relation in the objective logic can be convincing perhaps should be left open.

34 For this idealistic standard objection, see, for instance, Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, pp. 44, 205; *Encyclopedia* (3rd edn), §42 note. Concerning the following cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, pp. 139ff.; see also above note 19; furthermore cf. K. Cramer, '"Erlebnis": Thesen zu Hegels Theorie des Selbstbewußtseins mit Rücksicht auf die Aporien eines Grundbegriffs nachhegelscher Philosophie', *Stuttgarter Hegel-Tage 1970, Hegel-Studien*, supplementary

Vol. 11 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974) especially pp. 592ff. With regard to the problem of the circle in general and specifically in Fichte, cf. D. Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1967).

35 *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12, p. 194 (ist 'die absolute Beziehung auf sich selbst . . . welche als trennendes Urteil sich zum Gegenstande macht'). With regard to the following, cf. the more detailed explanation by Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität', pp. 251ff., 266ff.

36 In regard to the relation between logical judgments and categories, Hegel does not follow the Aristotelian and Kantian ontological view that the fundamental kinds of being or of being an object are characterized by logical modes of judgments. Rather, his theory of the development of ontologically basic determinations is connected, if anything, with the ontology of the late Plato. Cf. for the Platonic theory, e.g., F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (first published 1935, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973), pp. 274ff.

37 Cf. also Hegel's determination in his Jena manuscript of 1805/6 that the contrary moments, singularity and universality, are mediated in the syllogism and connected; 'copula is ego' ('Copula ist Ich'); the ego, which unites these contrary determinations in itself, is the true middle term. (See *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 8, p. 197.)

38 For this objection, as well as for the argument from infinite iteration, the assertion is decisive that the ego, for its self-representation, again and again is presupposed as being self-referential. This is thought to be valid also for the attempt to define the self-representing ego. But it remains unclear in the circle argument whether only a nominal definition is thought to be impossible – this view can be contested by an employment of equivalents of self-representation – or whether a real definition of the self-referential ego is held to be impossible. In this case, its real essence must be unknowable, whereas its thinking self-reference certainly can be thought. Because of these doubtful factors in this argument, the infinite iteration argument is more exact.

39 Concerning this problem, see Düsing, 'Das Problem der Subjektivität'.

Hegel and idealism

Karl Ameriks

Recently, much discussion of Hegel has focused on the nature of his idealism, and especially on its relation to Kant's transcendental idealism – a doctrine whose meaning is itself still much in dispute.¹ It is clear enough that Hegel calls himself an 'absolute idealist', and that he is a major figure in the 'German idealist' tradition, but the precise meaning and value of falling under the idealist label is not so clear. Moreover, some recent interpretations have suggested ways in which Hegel can be termed a realist,² and for all interpreters it is conceded that there is a peculiarly 'objective' nature to Hegel's idealism that serves to set it apart from most other versions.

In approaching this interpretative issue, one should keep in mind a feature of the intense contemporary debate about realism (the traditional shadow of idealism) spawned by the work of philosophers such as Dummett, Putnam and Mackie. That debate quickly revealed that one need not take an across-the-board position on realism, that attitude towards metaphysical ('transcendent' or 'abstract') or scientific (quantum, or simply 'theoretical') or ethical 'objects' can differ considerably, even for one and the same philosopher.³ Similarly with respect to Hegel, one need not insist that his idealism has one meaning or applies with equal strength across all domains. None the less, Hegel's encyclopaedic efforts clearly invite parallel treatments of idealism in diverse realms such as metaphysics and ethics.⁴ His systematicity suggests that a natural desideratum for at least one main line of approach to what Hegel's idealism means would be that it be an interpretation which allows that idealism to have a maximal range.

For this reason alone, Robert Pippin's impressive new work, *Hegel's Idealism*, deserves special attention because of its argument that throughout the early essays, the *Phenomenology*, the *Logic* and the mature system, Hegel's work can be seen as dominated by a modification of a

fundamental idealistic principle taken over from Kant. Using Pippin's claims as a chief point of departure, I aim to assess the value of construing Hegel's work in such a broad idealistic way. My own conclusions will diverge from Pippin's, for where he contends that Hegel's idealism is most intelligible through its relation to Kant, I will argue that Hegel's conception of this relation is fraught with serious misconceptions, and that what is distinctive in his idealism has regrettably little to do with Kant.

Hegel's understanding of 'idealism' would appear to be not very difficult to determine. His *Logic* devotes a whole 'Remark' explicitly to this topic,⁹ and in a fairly concise and straightforward fashion (after somewhat mysteriously introducing 'ideality' as the 'quality of infinity'), he makes the following claims:

(1) An 'idealist' is one who holds that 'the finite' is ideal.

(2) To hold this is to hold that the finite 'has no veritable being'.

(3) All significant philosophy holds and has held this, even if it has not developed the claim adequately – and hence there is no genuine conflict of 'idealistic' and 'realistic' philosophy.

(4) *For, to hold otherwise is, absurdly, to assign 'absolute being' to finite existence, to hold that things 'as they immediately present themselves in their sensuous immediacy' are not to be explained by (or, perhaps, regarded as 'moments', parts of, or abstractions from) something else, such as the 'thoughts' or 'principles' or 'universals' or 'ideal entities' of, for example, atomism or other traditional cosmologies.*

(5) As 'sublated,' i.e. explained, finite existence ('individual, sensuous things') is itself to be called 'ideal', although, in another sense (one connoting systematicity), that which explains, viz. 'the principle' or the 'universal', or 'spirit', can also be called 'ideal'.

(6) 'Subjective' or 'formal' (i.e. Kantian) idealism uses yet another meaning of 'ideal', applying it to anything that is representation (*Vorstellung*) even that which is only representation ('even fancies'). This is fitting in so far as what is present in representation, 'the content', is not 'so-called real existence' but rather something 'sublated' 'in the simplicity of the ego', i.e. something understood as 'for me'.

(7) However, this subjective idealism consist in merely distinguishing the 'form for me' from the 'external existence' of the contents of mind, and in abstracting from all the specifics of those contents – which thus remain 'finite' in so far as they remain otherwise unconnected and unexplained.

(8) This distinction leaves one (in Kant) with a finite subjectivity opposing a finite objectivity, and with a set of finite contents, so that even if the contrast between subject and object were overcome (perhaps in an

'intellectual intuition'), the contents would remain finite, i.e. not yet the 'true' or 'affirmative' infinite of a full, self-explanatory system.⁶

These claims indicate that if the question of idealism is discussed in Hegel's original terms (claim (4)), it is not much of an issue. The alternative to idealism is such a straw man that here the real issue becomes simply what specific variety of idealism one should develop. Whereas idealism often is taken as primarily a negative thesis, a startling denial or reduction of the being of some commonly accepted entities, the idealism Hegel starts with is rather a hard-to-deny positive thesis, an assertion that immediate appearances point to something else, some non-immediate things or relations.⁷

In this context, Hegel is obviously concerned with distancing himself from his predecessor, Kantian idealism. Hegel is certainly willing to credit Kant in some respects, for he admits 'Kantian philosophy . . . constitutes the base and the starting point of recent German philosophy, and thus its merit remains unaffected by whatever faults may be found in it.'⁸ None the less, Hegel clearly is not willing to credit Kant with generating the impetus to idealism as such, for he regards that impetus to be as old as philosophy itself. And, as claims (6) to (8) above show, Hegel also objects to the specific 'subjective' nature of Kant's idealism, which allegedly remains stuck in the 'finite' and blocks the path to a properly developed 'absolute' idealism. Hegel's objections concern more than the familiar point that Kant errs in requiring unknowable things in themselves beyond appearances; what they stress here is the idea that Kant's notion of appearances is already deficient, that it is blind to their underlying systematic or 'infinite' content. For all these reasons one would hardly expect that the best way to understand the specific nature of Hegel's *idealism* is to see it as a development of Kant's, and yet that is precisely what many interpreters have proposed – now, most notably, Pippin.

Pippin's strategy is to argue that all experience is 'inherently reflexive', that this idea was central to the development of Hegel's position, and that it remains as the common core in Kant's doctrine of apperception and Hegel's idealism. Hence, to understand Hegel's idealism one must first determine what the doctrine of apperception means, how Kant's idealism is related to it, and then how Hegel's philosophy is related to both.

On Pippin's interpretation, Kantian idealism consists essentially in a 'doctrine of apperception' that is taken to mean 'for anything to count as a representation of mine, I must be self-consciously representing such an object, implicitly taking myself to be representing thusly'.⁹ A difficult systematic problem with this formulation is that the doctrine appears defensible only when reduced to an analytic form. Leaving that aside, the crucial interpretative claim here is that Hegelian idealism consists

largely in taking over this doctrine while dismissing Kant's claim that there are 'forms of intuition' which restrict us from knowing things in themselves. This claim is designated as a distinct and especially questionable 'restriction thesis'. It is sharply distinguished from the use of 'the doctrine of apperception' in the transcendental deduction of the categories, its use in supposedly showing what, and only what, is necessary for there to be self-consciousness. Transcendental arguments – and thus Hegel's system, which is presented as a string of arguments of this form – are therefore said by Pippin to be already idealistic simply because they rest on 'reflexive' (which Hegel equates with 'infinite' and 'ideal') determinations, i.e. determinations following from the idea that 'consciousness can be said to be in relation to an object only to the extent that it *takes itself* to be'.¹¹ A corollary to this idea is that there is no sense in 'noumenal', or wholly transcendent, claims.

Whether one agrees with Pippin in seeing Hegel's idealism as largely following Kant's, or whether one rather sees it as basically a departure, depends on what is taken as the kernel and what is taken as the shell of idealism. There are a number of possibilities here, since we already have such a proliferation of meanings for 'idealism'. Clearly, Pippin's own understanding of the term is made to fit his claims, but those claims become vulnerable if a more traditional understanding is employed. In particular, if Kantian idealism is taken metaphysically rather than epistemologically, then its argument for the ideality of space and time, as based on the 'antinomies' of idealism, is most naturally understood as not just meaning that concepts as we theoretically employ them apply 'only' to the domain of our experience,¹² but rather as also making the ontological claim that there is something beyond that domain to which we cannot (with theoretical warrant) apply them, viz. a non-spatio-temporal thing-(or things-)-in-itself.¹³ Otherwise, the statement that they apply 'only' to the domain of experience could be quite consistent with a full-blooded realism which takes there to be nothing beyond this domain. In other words, unless we take as fundamental something like the 'restriction thesis' rather than the mere doctrine of apperception, the metaphysical point of Kant's insisting on being an idealist seems lost.

Whatever the case is with Kant, it would seem that with Hegel this possible consistency with traditional realism need not bother Pippin, let alone other interpreters who want to say that Hegel's philosophy is 'objective' and compatible with many versions of realism. For Pippin, Hegel can still be called an idealist as long as his argumentative strategy is 'reflexive' in a special way – thus, even if, as I believe, this happens not really to be Kant's reason for calling his own philosophy idealistic, and even if, therefore, Hegel cannot be simply taking over from Kant his reason for regarding himself as an idealist. In one sense, we already know this to be true in any case, since the Remark discussed earlier from

the *Logic* shows Hegel had independent reasons for calling himself an idealist. But since it must be admitted that elsewhere he also tended to link his idealism with considerations of reflexivity, it could be argued that these considerations still show there is one important sense (even if not Kant's or Hegel's original sense) in which Hegel does take from Kant something crucial that he calls idealistic.

However, to stop here would be to do injustice to the departures Hegel wants to make from other idealists, especially Kant. These departures concern the very point that is supposedly borrowed from Kant, namely, the idea of reflexivity. Hegel notes that for Kant 'the determining of an object by the ego . . . is to be regarded as an original and necessary act of consciousness', but Hegel insists 'this objectifying act, in its freedom from the opposition of consciousness, is nearer to what may be taken simply for *thought* [as opposed to mere fancy] as such'.¹⁴ Kant is given historical credit for thereby 'introducing' the 'abstract relation of a subjective knowing to an object', thus the 'infinite form' of the Notion, but he is criticized for not yet treating its content as infinite, i.e. as a self-determined, necessary system.¹⁵ Kant is not even credited with 'reaching' the Notion's infinite form; he merely 'introduces' it, for 'that form has still to be relieved of the finite determinateness in which it is ego, or consciousness'.¹⁶ Later Hegel adds 'the actual development of the science which starts from the ego shows that in that development the object has and retains the perennial character of an other for the ego, and that the ego which formed the starting point is, therefore, still entangled in the world of appearance and is not the pure knowledge which has in truth overcome the opposition of consciousness'.¹⁷ Kant is neither the explicit nor the sole object of this criticism, but Hegel clearly meant his remarks here to be applicable to Kant, and especially to Kant's idea of the thing-in-itself and the restriction of our theoretical knowledge to a merely phenomenal domain.

These passages cause obvious difficulties for any proposal that Hegel's idealism is to be understood as a straightforward development of the 'inherent reflexivity' of experience. If one's prime model for reflection is Kant's own idea of apperception, and if that idea is characterized by Hegel as essentially finite, then it would seem that following Kant's philosophy impedes rather than facilitates access to Hegel's idealism. As long as that philosophy is characterized simply by its doctrine of apperception, then, just as with the traditional 'restriction thesis', we have a standpoint that Hegel's idealism is set up to reject rather than accept. Moreover, Hegel even proposes (see again claims (7) and (8) above) that these doctrines are linked in an unfortunate way, that taking apperception precisely as Kant develops it leads to the restriction thesis, to an idealism cut off from knowledge of reality.¹⁸

Hegel's objections to focusing on the subject of experience, or self-

consciousness, have been stressed in criticisms of Pippin by Terry Pinkard.¹⁹ From Pinkard's perspective, 'in Hegel's eyes what is important in the Kantian philosophy is *not* its attempt to derive anything from the conditions of self-consciousness, but its attempt to construct a self-subsuming, self-reflexive explanation of the categories. Self-consciousness is only an *instance* of such a structure.'²⁰ This may not seem to be a radical criticism in so far as it still shows that an idea of 'reflexivity' is at the core of Hegel's system, and even that its origin might be found in Kant's philosophy. However, this reflexivity no longer has a necessary relation to traditional meanings of 'ideality,' let alone to Pippin's apperceptive sense.²¹ Furthermore, even the limited role in Hegel's system that Pinkard tries to allow for self-consciousness is questionable. Pinkard says Hegel saw Kant's notion of apperception as a 'single principle that could explain . . . the "whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy"'.²² Yet Kant himself does not speak of 'explaining', but simply says, 'the synthetic unity of apperception is therefore the highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic'.²³ Kant means that no logic or philosophy, indeed none of our knowledge, can violate this unity, but he hardly believes that the specific propositions of logic, for example, are to be derived from it. Since Hegel obviously understood this as well,²⁴ it is still not clear exactly what he did see in Kant's idea of apperception, and how he meant to relate this to his own idealism.

What is clear is that even in his early works²⁵ Hegel was very fascinated by this idea. In a high point of the *Logic*, the account of 'The Notion as Notion', he comes back to dwell on it, claiming 'one of the profoundest and truest insights' of the *Critique* to be 'that the unity which constitutes the nature of the Notion is recognized as the original synthetic unity of apperception'.²⁶ Hegel understands that this unity corresponds to the objective (judgmental) rather than to the mere subjective (associative) unity of consciousness, but he also says that 'this objective unity is the unity of the ego with itself', so that 'the comprehension of an object consists in nothing else than that the ego makes it its own'.²⁷

It is tempting to take this passage as a demonstration that Hegel means to reduce his central and mysterious idea, 'the Notion', to the relatively familiar idea of apperception. But such a reduction appears both naive and directly contrary to the just-reviewed objection in Hegel to the strategy of relying on the idea of self-consciousness as fundamental. Yet the text goes on in a way that can seem oblivious to those objections: 'The object therefore has its objectivity in the Notion and this is the unity of self-consciousness into which it is received; consequently its objectivity, or the Notion, is itself none other than the nature of self-consciousness . . . we are justified . . . in referring to the nature of the I to learn what the Notion is.'²⁸

By itself this is a mysterious passage, because it would seem that the mere relation of any arbitrary content of mind to the 'I' that can have it is a relation that is too simple to account for what a Notion is – especially since, as Hegel stresses, we do have feelings and intuitions which are not raised to the level of 'thought' or the Notion. The mystery begins to unravel when we see what Hegel immediately goes on to say: 'But conversely, it is necessary for this purpose to have grasped the *Notion* of the I as stated above.'²⁹ What is 'stated above' is that the ego 'makes something its own' by pervading it and bringing it 'into the *universality* that is immediately a *determinateness*'.³⁰ I take this to mean that, just as with Kant, an ordinary ego's possession of something is epistemically relevant only in so far as it exercises the general qualities of conceptualization.

It is also true, as Hegel no doubt means to stress here, that the 'ego' has a special 'universality', since for any and all contents that we can have, that can arise for 'a' mind,³¹ these can, upon abstraction, be seen as instances of a universal 'mind'. This is why Hegel can give Kant credit for 'introducing' the 'infinite' abstract form of the Notion: the 'I' of apperception has a special inclusiveness, encompassing, although not really modifying or internally determining, all other universals that can arise for consideration. But all this does not mean that the full extent of the Hegelian relations between 'universality' and 'determinateness', the relation that reappears in all instances of the Notion, can be discerned from a consideration of the 'I' alone. So while it is true that in looking at the 'I' we 'learn what the Notion is', i.e. what an especially inclusive universal is, this still leaves us with the work of 'reaching' the Notion in its objective form by uncovering the systematic ('infinite') structure of all the fundamental universals.

It is therefore only appropriate that when Hegel goes on in this section to explicate the nature of his idealism, the doctrine of apperception enters in only indirectly. His main claim here goes back to his basic definition of idealism: 'It is only as it is thought that the object is truly in and for itself; in intuition or ordinary conception it is only an appearance.'³² This claim is thoroughly acceptable to a modern realist, especially a scientific realist, and it is just another way of saying again that idealism consists in taking 'finite existence', i.e. given sensible particulars merely as given, to be not absolute, to require something else to explain them. But while Hegel had said earlier that it is simply non-philosophical, even if common, to deny this idealism, it is remarkable that here he goes on to claim that, like 'ordinary psychology', 'Kantian transcendental philosophy', specifically in its doctrine of apperception, fails to appreciate this point, and so commits the error of falling short of idealism.³³ This is supposedly because, on its view, 'it is the material that is regarded as the absolute reality . . . the empirical material, the manifold of intuition and represen-

tation, first exists on its own account'.³⁴ That is, the understanding, or apperception, is taken to add a unity or cognitive content to data that are presumed to be what they are prior to and independent of this activity: 'the very expression *synthesis* easily recalls the conception of an *external* unity and a *mere combination* of entities that are *intrinsically separate*'.³⁵ In other words, Hegel is charging Kant with 'the myth of the given'.

From *Hegel's* ultimate perspective, it thus turns out as we originally suspected, viz. that Kant's own doctrine of apperception is not what makes Kant into an idealist but in fact is rather what keeps him from being one in the most basic sense. However, if it can be shown that Kant's doctrine of apperception is not subject to the 'myth' imputed to it, then it can be shown that, despite Hegel's own view, this doctrine alone does not constitute a *real* difference between Kant's philosophy and Hegel's. In showing that this is the case, I will also be arguing indirectly that the essence of Hegel's own idealism here turns out not to be tied very closely to what it supposedly borrowed from or corrected in Kant.

It is odd that, despite his great interest in apperception, Hegel seems to have missed how much Kant's account shares with his own. Like many other readers, Hegel often took Kant's account of perception to be fundamentally Humean. A contemporary Hegelian, Robert Stern, has expressed Hegel's reading this way:

Hegel's fundamental objection to Kant is that his subjective idealism begins from his empiricist standpoint, not in the sense that Kant accepted the representationalism and phenomenalism of the latter, but rather in the sense that he accepted its reductionist atomism; Hegel argues that Kant failed to see that the individual exists as the exemplification of a substance-universal, and began with the assumption that the object is reducible to a plurality of sensible properties that are combined together by the experiencing subject.³⁶

The basic charge here is simply that Kant's talk of 'synthesis' can make sense only if the items synthesized by the mind are presumed to be individuals not exemplifying, or at least not understood to be exemplifying, any kind terms. But this charge falsely presumes that Kant believed synthesis is that which *first* makes items subject to conceptualizability (which is not to deny that synthesis is present whenever items are known). In fact, when Kant speaks of the 'synthesis of (objective or pure) apperception', his direct concern is not with concepts but rather with what makes *judgment* possible for beings like us. The conditions of such judgments are not identical with the bare conditions of conceptualization. For this reason Kant can hold that the transcendental ideality that affects the

domain of our judgment does not automatically attach to the latter. And thus he can, and does, also hold that it is possible even for us to have coherent (even if not theoretically assertible) concepts of non-phenomenal properties or beings, for example, the categories in their pure meanings, or the concept of God as specified in 'transcendental theology'.³⁷ Nothing in Kant's account of concept formation need conflict with traditional realist theories of the reference of the categories, or theories of abstraction according to which there are universals really to be discovered, even if not immediately recognized, in the items of experience.

It is true that many contemporary 'Kantians' (for example, Hilary Putnam) have tried to develop an anti-realism grounded on a general theory of concepts, and that they have gestured towards Kant as a source of this theory. This connection is accepted even by those who criticize the theory. Thus when Nicholas Wolterstorff argues against those who assume that 'since *goose* is one of our concepts, reality apart from us does not come with geese in it', he traces this assumption back to Kant's talk of concepts as rules 'for ordering experience'.³⁸ He then notes that we can reject anti-realism about geese if we 'suppose that concepts, instead of being rules that we follow for introducing unities and divisions into reality, are graspings of properties'.³⁹ But Wolterstorff does not provide any evidence that Kant himself took his theory of concepts to be incompatible with such 'graspings of properties'. Moreover, Wolterstorff, like many other contemporary readers, ignores the obvious consideration that if Kant had believed in such a 'short' road to anti-realism (and had been willing to accept its radical consequences), then he could and would have saved himself the effort of all his distinctive and complex arguments for transcendental idealism. This unfortunate interpretative tendency can be found already in Hegel, who did take note of the 'complex arguments' but was not above reducing Kant's position to a 'short argument', for example, when rejecting Kant's 'realism' about things-in-themselves as supposedly tied to the notion of something beyond all concepts.⁴⁰

To say that Kant's idealism is not meant to follow directly from his idea of concept as such is not to deny that a more radical and appealing 'Copernican' theory of concepts might be developed by someone.⁴¹ And, Kant would agree with the idea that items cannot be *understood apart* from thought; he just would not agree that the contemporary notion – reformulated by Pippin in Hegelian terms – that insistence on this simple idea is a good way to define or argue for (or counter) 'idealism' in any significant sense. But whether they hold to this simple definition, or stress the more basic metaphysical one in the *Logic*, Hegelians must live with the fact, noted at the beginning, that in many contexts their notion of idealism does not mark a contrast with traditional realism. Thus Stern is forced into odd formulations like this: 'According to Hegel, therefore,

we are driven towards *idealism and a realist account* of universals if we seek to escape from the fragmented and confused world of sense.⁴²

So far, it has been argued that Kant's notion of synthesis does not entail a non-Hegelian view (i.e. a 'non-realist' view, where 'realism' is Platonism about universals, and a 'non-idealist' view, where 'idealism' is non-atomism about perception) that concepts are mere 'extrinsic' unities. But problems for the notion of synthesis could still arise as long as there are some items, some intuitions, that are 'intrinsically separate'. In particular, the Kantian notion of sensible intuition might appear to block the defence of his philosophy from the Hegelian charge of falling prey to the myth of the given and thus to the crude 'subjective' idealism that goes along with it. That is, one might think that, whatever his general view of concepts, Kantian sensible intuitions are precisely real and individual but unconceptualized items⁴³ – and thus items that are thought, naively, to depend on *our* 'rule-creating' mind to give them *any* form. However, Kant stresses that every intuition relevant to us must immediately fall under certain forms, the forms of time and (if 'outer') space. And although these forms are supposed to have various special features, it is clear that everything within them is also necessarily an instance of at least the concepts of time and (if 'outer') space,⁴⁴ and thus hardly inconceptualizable. Kant's main question is never whether these individuals originally can occur independently of all properties and concepts, but rather whether they might be perceived by us without falling under *pure* concepts, or at least pure non-sensible concepts. (This is not yet to say that Kant must disallow unconceptualizable individuals; the point is just that they are not relevant as such to his epistemology, they are not really 'given'. But it is also quite unlikely that Kant's metaphysics could allow individuals beyond *everyone's* conceptualization, for that would conflict with his own conception of God.)

What this implies, ironically, is that the very doctrines which many have seen as separating Kant from Hegel, the doctrines of 'givenness' in intuition and of forms of intuition, are doctrines which disclose fundamental points where Kant and Hegel are in agreement. Kant's philosophy is no more subject to a myth of a given than Hegel's is subject to the denial of any contingent, empirical input; in other words, the former is not as 'subjective' and the latter not as 'absolute' as is often alleged. The universality of the form of sensibility for our intuition implies that for both Kant and Hegel there must be givens, but not 'bare' givens for which we create an *initial* form by merely imposing rules. These points of agreement are thus also points which reveal a common acceptance of traditional realism in its perceptual and ontological senses even if in other distinctive ways Kant and Hegel can also be said to be idealists.

From what has been argued so far, Hegel has failed in his energetic efforts to set up Kant as a philosopher who managed to fall short of

idealism in what Hegel regarded as its 'basic' sense, i.e. the one defined at the beginning of the Remark in the *Logic*. This should be understandable, since this idealism was introduced as so innocuous that denying it would seem absurd. And surely it should not be surprising if Hegel also did not succeed in the baroque project of showing that the very tool which supposedly earned Kant credit for a major development in the history of idealism, viz. the doctrine of apperception, is also something that was so misused by Kant that it left him in a position beneath this basic idealism.

The weaknesses here in Hegel's critique of Kant still leave him with other means for distinguishing his position from Kant's (for example, see again claims (7) and (8) above). Many of these means are tied to Hegel's objections to the peculiarities of transcendental idealism and especially to specific grounds for the restriction thesis. These objections will not be discussed here because they are not directly relevant and they have been evaluated (as inadequate) elsewhere.⁴⁵ The question that remains here is simply whether there can be found any other means, i.e. ones independent of these ultimately unprofitable relations to Kant, that can be used to determine a significant form of idealism in Hegel.

If there is an interesting direct contrast to be set up between Hegel and idealism, it is certainly not one that involves the denials typical of radical epistemological idealism. As many interpreters have pointed out, Hegel's position has nothing to do with a rejection of perceptual realism. Whether or not Hegel succeeds here in defeating the traditional sceptic,⁴⁶ his intention is clearly that 'empirical realism' is not to be rejected, and that private 'representations' of alleged mental substances are to be denied epistemic and ontological primacy.

The positive doctrine that Hegel himself stresses as distinguishing his idealism from what he regards as the basic doctrine of idealism in general, viz. that 'the finite' requires something else, involves the specification of the relations that immediate appearances supposedly require. This is where Hegel's *a priori* teleological holism, his Notion of the 'true infinite', enters in, and it is also where Hegel's contemporary apologists take leave. Willem de Vries has done perhaps the clearest work in articulating this holism, but he says nothing in defence of its crucial principle, viz. 'the world-whole is a kind, the ultimate kind; it is the universal objective purpose. Because it is the universal objective purpose, all other purposes are subordinated to it'.⁴⁷ Pippin explicitly wants to avoid such 'metaphysical' interpretations; he wants Hegel's idealism to appear attractive on 'critical' grounds. But can an interesting form of Hegelian idealism be found that is true to the text, that is not clearly extravagant, and that is not subject to the charges of triviality made earlier?

An obvious move here is to transform Hegel's questionable ontological holism into a contemporary epistemological holism, i.e. a coherentist

theory of knowledge.⁴⁸ Elsewhere I have discussed some of the epistemic difficulties of several recent interpretations along this line.⁴⁹ Here I will end by asking just what such interpretations have to do with the issue of idealism.

On Pippin's terminology, it was Hegel's apriorism, his belief in the validity of certain kinds of transcendental arguments, that was definitive of 'idealism'. It has already been noted that this definition is at odds with traditional views (since it appears so compatible with common-sense realism) and much of Kant's and Hegel's own work, but what is striking now is that it also appears consistent with either epistemological holism or its denial. If some kind of primitive foundationalism could be resurrected, so that the evidential weight of some propositions could be considered independently of the whole of experience with which they are compared, that still appears quite compatible with either the denial or the affirmation of all the various kinds of idealism discussed so far.

Of course, Hegel's work does appear in many ways to be directed against such a foundationalism, but not simply on the ground of either his basic notion of idealism, or his mere notion of a teleological world-whole. The basic notion does require that *immediate* appearances not be regarded as a separable foundation of knowledge, but that notion, like the general notion of a teleological world, leaves open other possible foundations of knowledge. Hegel is usually treated as a coherence theorist, rather than as a foundationalist, but coherentism is not to be established by simply accepting that 'the finite' is not absolute, or by saying only that it is part of some teleological whole. Hegel's own definitions of idealism thus leave it logically independent of epistemological holism.

A final revelant connection between such holism and traditional idealism may seem to arise, however, if one takes the former to correspond to Hegel's system, and the latter to correspond to a rejection of the *traditional* 'realist' worry that, as Pippin puts it, 'even if *our* best criteria for "knowledge of X" are fulfilled, we still have no way of knowing whether such fulfillment does tell us anything about X'.⁵⁰ Everything hinges, however, on how this worry is dismissed. Hegel does not think, like an *epistemological* idealist, that although there *could be* an inaccessible X beyond our 'knowledge', the worry is dismissible precisely because such an X is inaccessible. This is not even a possibility for Hegel because he does not allow that we should say we are dealing with what is 'only our' best criteria. Hegel's claim is that the relevant 'best criteria' are determined by the Notion itself, by what really is, and that they are something for which we have no coherent reason to think we lack access in principle.⁵¹ Even more radically, he aims to show, as Michael Forster has noted, that all sceptical attempts to hold that we lack such access can be proven to be 'self-defeating'.⁵²

One can surely challenge Hegel's particular argument here, as well as

his claim to completeness,⁵³ but all this still concedes that he takes his system to represent reality itself and not 'just our view' of things. And this means that he turns out to be on the 'realist' side of the debate on holism; a system of knowledge that was fully coherent 'internally' would not *thereby* be sufficient for him. What complicates matters is that he does not really believe that any 'partial' system (i.e. any alternative to his own) can be truly coherent, but this is not to say that the full coherence which he ascribes to his system is what makes him call it knowledge. Rather, it is considered knowledge, indeed 'absolute knowledge', because it supposedly agrees with the Notion that captures reality itself.

In sum, we have yet to find a simultaneously accurate, substantive and appealing sense in which Hegel should be regarded as an idealist (let alone a Kantian idealist) – although there surely are many reasons to treat him as an idealist if one does not insist on such a threefold demand.

Notes

1 See S. Priest, *Hegel's Critique of Kant* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), as well as my 'Recent Work on Kant's Theoretical Philosophy', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1982), 1–10; Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), and my review, *Topoi* 3 (1984), 181–5.

2 See especially Kenneth Westphal's *Hegel's Epistemological Realism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), and my discussions in 'Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1985), 22, and 'Recent Work on Hegel: The Rehabilitation of an Epistemologist?', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 52 (1992), 177–203.

3 See, for example, the general remarks by Alvin Plantinga, 'How to be an Anti-Realist', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 1982, pp. 47–70. A direct connection between Hegel and this contemporary debate is made by Nicholas Wolterstorff in 'Realism vs. Anti-Realism', in *Realism, Proceedings and Addresses of the Catholic Philosophical Association* 59 (1984), 182–205.

4 Cf. R. B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 41.

5 Hegel, *Science of Logic*, tr. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), Bk 1, ch. 2, Transition, 'Remark Two'; cf. also Bk 1, ch. 3, A. b. 'Remark', and Bk 3, 'The Notion in General', 587–8, and Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, §95 and §45, *Zusatz*.

6 The reflexive character of what is self-explanatory allows Hegel at this point to make his transition to the third and final specification of the 'quality' of being, viz. to what he calls 'being-for self' or 'absolutely determined being', i.e. being which is no longer determined by mere 'imperfect' qualities, such as 'in itself', where a division between thought and being remains fundamental.

7 For a similar interpretation, see Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism*, p. 142: 'something is ideal if (and only if) it is ontologically dependent on something else'. If and only if it is independent, it is called 'infinite'. Westphal's

interpretation adds that Hegel's full idealism includes the assertion that this 'something else' involves a teleologically ordered system. Cf. also Paul Eisenberg, 'Was Hegel a Panlogist?', *Notus* 24 (1990), 160–1, who concludes: 'Hegel's own idealism turns out to be a very strong form of metaphysical holism', and M. J. Inwood, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 411–12.

8 *Science of Logic*, p. 61n.

9 Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 132. This claim is discussed further in my 'Recent Work on Hegel'.

10 I will bracket a familiar problem here which R. C. S. Walker has stressed, viz. that 'Hegel can use arguments which look like transcendental arguments, but . . . what is required are the principles of Hegel's own dialectic; and the assumption that these are required cannot be regarded as too minimal to be interestingly denied.' *The Coherence Theory of Truth* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 96.

11 Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 114.

12 Cf. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 267, n23.

13 This interpretation has been challenged by Allison and others; see above note 1. An opposing view can be found in P. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 385ff.

14 *Science of Logic*, p. 62.

15 *Science of Logic*, p. 63. Cf. *Encyclopaedia*, §41, Zusatz.

16 *Science of Logic*, p. 63. Here differences between the terms 'consciousness' and 'self-consciousness' will be ignored.

17 *Science of Logic*, p. 77.

18 It is argued that Hegel goes astray at this point, so that, ironically, it is largely just because he misinterprets Kant that Hegel comes to feel he must reject him here.

19 T. Pinkard, 'The Categorical Satisfaction of Self-Reflexive Reason', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 19 (1989), and 'How Kantian was Hegel?', *Review of Metaphysics* 43 (1990). In those issues there are also discussions by Pippin of Pinkard.

20 Pinkard, 'Categorical', 8. Robert Stern has recently expressed an even more radical interpretation: 'Hegel's metaphysics is rightly called idealist because universals are used to account for the structure of the object; but it is opposed to Kantian idealism because this structure is not tied in with the synthesizing nature of any subject.' *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 112. For the opposite view, see, for example, Charles Lewis, 'Recent Literature on Hegel's Logic', *Philosophische Rundschau* 28 (1981), 115: 'Hegel's *Logik* is a logic of subjectivity; its categories describe the structure of the "ich" '.

21 Pinkard himself presents Hegel's system as an 'alternative to realism' only by defining realism in a peculiar way as the doctrine that 'we cannot say whether or not certain substructures appear to us' (*Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), p. 57). He has in mind the rejection of a specific kind of epistemic agnosticism about Kantian things in themselves which hardly amounts to a complete alternative to traditional realism. On Pinkard's terminology, the doctrine that 'essence must appear' (and that we know that) is called 'Hegel's alternative to realism', and yet it appears equivalent to what on Westphal's terminology is called the 'epistemological realism' that Hegel accepts (cf above, n. 7).

22 Pinkard, 'Categorical', 7. The internal quote is from Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 134n.

23 *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 134n.

24 See, for example, *Science of Logic*, p. 789.

25 Cf. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, tr. W. Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1977), p. 73.

26 *Science of Logic*, p. 584. Cf. *Encyclopaedia*, 'Lesser Logic', §42. Pippin rests the defence of his position largely on this passage in 'Hegel's Idealism: Prospects', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 19 (1989), 30–1.

27 *Science of Logic*, pp. 584–5.

28 *Science of Logic*, p. 585; cf. pp. 777–8, 789.

29 *Science of Logic*, p. 585. Last italics added by me.

30 *Science of Logic*, p. 585.

31 Elsewhere I have argued that this is an important restriction, and that it explains why Kant also calls his principle of apperception analytic. See 'Kant and Guyer on Apperception', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 62 (1982), 174–86.

32 *Science of Logic*, p. 585.

33 *Science of Logic*, p. 587; cf. pp. 489–90 and p. 780, where Kant's treatment of the I is said to 'cling to phenomena and the mere conceptions [*bloße Vorstellung*] given in everyday consciousness . . . to renounce the Notion and philosophy'.

34 *Science of Logic*, p. 587.

35 *Science of Logic*, p. 589.

36 R. Stern, *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object*, 112–13. (I will ignore a problem with part of Stern's formulation, the problem of how sensible 'properties' could be thought to be understood apart from universals.) Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, §41, *Zusatz*.

37 See especially Kant's *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*, tr. by A. Wood and G. Clark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

38 Wolterstorff, 'Realism and Anti-Realism', 62.

39 *ibid.* The 'instead' is controversial, for if Wolterstorff allows that *geese* could be one of our concepts and *geese* still part of reality, it would seem he should also allow that concepts could be rules for ordering experience and still involve graspings of properties.

40 Cf. *Science of Logic*, p. 593, which claims that for Kant 'reality lies absolutely outside the Notion'. Another version of a 'short argument' would tie transcendental ideality immediately to the feature of intuitability rather than conceivability. See *Science of Logic*, pp. 590–1: '[it is] maintained that we cannot know things as they truly are . . . on the ground that the content is only the manifold of intuition'. Cf. my 'Kant, Fichte, and Short Arguments to Idealism', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 72 (1990), 63–85.

41 See in particular the work of Gerold Prauss, who has argued for a radical Kantian, i.e. 'Copernican', theory of reference.

42 Stern, *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object*, p. 113. My italics. Cf. Inwood, *Hegel*, p. 417: 'Hegel, however, believes that there actually are dogs, animals, men and so on quite independently of the particular conceptual system which I or my culture system happen to employ.'

43 Cf. R. Rorty, 'Strawson's Objectivity Argument', *Review of Metaphysics* 24 (1970), 207–44.

44 Of course, Kant does consider these concepts (and all our merely empirical concepts) to be transcendently ideal, but this is something which is to follow from considerations other than their simply being concepts.

45 See again my 'Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy'.

46 See the discussion of M. Forster's *Hegel and Skepticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) in my 'Recent Work on Hegel'.

47 Willem de Vries, *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 16. Cf. n. 7 above.

48 One might also focus on considering Hegel as an advocate of a coherence theory of *truth*. Ralph Walker has argued Hegel cannot succeed with such a theory since he must admit at least that something's being a belief does not depend on its being believed to be a belief. That is, to escape a vicious circle, 'Hegel takes it for granted that we know quite unproblematically that certain things are believed, but this cannot be the case if to know that *p* is a belief is to know that "*p* is a belief" coheres with a rational system' (*The Coherence Theory of Truth*, p. 100). I am not sure that Hegel does begin with such 'unproblematic' knowledge, but given the earlier discussion of his realism about universals, it is likely that he can allow a correspondence theory of truth, as Westphal has argued (*Hegel's Epistemological Realism*, p. 110).

49 See my 'Recent Work on Hegel'.

50 Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 39.

51 Cf. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 83, 'what, prior to a full speculative understanding might have seemed the merely *subjective* specification of the ways of the world is divided up, *is* the way the world is divided up'.

52 Forster, *Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 105. Cf. my discussion in 'Recent Work on Hegel'.

53 Cf. my remarks in 'Recent Work on Hegel', n. 54.

Hegel's concept of *Geist*

Robert R. Williams

Few would deny the importance of *Geist* in the philosophy of Hegel. If *Geist* is the systematic concept which unifies Hegelian philosophy, then the interpretation of *Geist* is crucial to the proper understanding and appreciation of that philosophy. The interpretation of *Geist* raises many of the major problems of Hegel-interpretation. Unfortunately, a successful, comprehensive interpretation of *Geist* and, with it, Hegelianism, has thus far eluded interpreters. Our situation is not unlike that portrayed in the Hindu fable of the blind men and the elephant. About the only safe comment is that in our case the 'elephant' is very big and surpasses our ability to take it all in. The more cynical may harbour the suspicion that not even Hegel knew what he really meant. I do not pretend to possess the key which unlocks all doors, or to have somehow succeeded where all others have failed. However, I do want to provoke and advance the interpretative discussion by presenting what I take to be an important but hitherto ignored or suppressed interpretation of *Geist*, at least in English-speaking circles. My perspective is informed by a recent study of the *Phenomenology* and by recent scholarship on the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) in Fichte and Hegel.

At least three different concepts or interpretative models of *Geist* appear in Hegel interpretation. One interpretation sees *Geist* as a more or less direct descendant of Kant's transcendental ego (Findlay, Solomon). Accordingly, Hegel's philosophy is regarded as an instance of transcendental philosophy (Taylor, Westphal). However, this view overlooks or ignores Hegel's severe criticism of transcendental philosophy. To paraphrase Jacobi's remark concerning the thing-in-itself, it is impossible to enter the Kantian philosophy without taking a transcendental turn, but it is equally impossible to remain in the Kantian philosophy after taking the transcendental turn. For Kant raised but did not resolve the problem of the *ontological interpretation* of the transcendental ego, and, with it,

transcendental philosophy. Hence, as Hegel repeatedly pointed out, Kant is trapped in the impossible predicament of attempting to know before he knows. The problem of the ontological interpretation of transcendental philosophy can be postponed, but not avoided, save at the price of a merely methodological idealism, which Kant is not willing to accept. This brings us to the second interpretative model.

What is the ontological interpretation of the transcendental ego? Several problems rear their ugly heads when this question is addressed. If the transcendental ego is retained, it seems to require a referent or 'carrier'. If the referent is identified with 'human being', the result is a 'Left Hegelian' interpretation. However, this interpretation calls into question the foundational status of the transcendental subject as the ultimate condition of possible experience, and calls forth the charges of psychologism and relativism. In order to avoid relativism and anthropologism, the 'Right Hegelian' interpretation rejects the identification of the transcendental subject with the human subject, and works out instead an onto-theological interpretation of *Geist*. Then Hegel is regarded as a transcendent metaphysical theologian in the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic sense; the self-othering of *Geist* in nature is understood as a version of the neo-platonic emanation theory which has been transformed by a concept of subjectivity as negatively dialectical. The problem with this interpretation is that the transcendental method is ruined by the apparently dogmatic postulate of onto-theology. Hegel would recognize and reject both of these alternatives, for the former is basically a warmed-over version of the subjective idealism of Fichte, and the latter a version of the dogmatic *Naturphilosophie* of the early Schelling. Common to both is the acceptance and/or retention of the transcendental ego. I think that Hegel rejects this concept, or transforms it. He does not take up the ontological question in this form.

Third, there is the social-intersubjective interpretation of *Geist*. This interpretation of *Geist* has recently been set forth in an interesting study by Ludwig Siep¹ and has begun to receive attention by other German scholars.² I wish to explore this model. The question is, if *Geist* is fundamentally social-intersubjective, then what does Hegel's so-called 'idealism' mean? For in its common acceptance, 'idealism' seems to contradict and exclude intersubjectivity because it eliminates the ontological transcendence of the other, and is haunted by the problem of solipsism, as both Husserl and Sartre have pointed out.³ Moreover, Sartre claims that Hegel's ontological idealism founders on the problem of intersubjectivity: the *Geist* that is certain of being all reality has displaced the other ontologically. But it might with greater accuracy be replied that what is interesting about Hegel's concept of *Geist* is that it is the result of, and consequently *presupposes*, the very intersubjective mediation which Sartre (wrongly) thinks it eliminates!

In what follows our strategy will be to show, first, that the transcendental interpretation of *Geist* does founder on the problem of intersubjectivity. That is one reason why Hegel rejects transcendental philosophy, and why *Geist* can be properly understood only as a departure from transcendentalism and foundationalism. Second, we shall examine Hegel's philosophy of absolute *Geist* to determine whether and how far the social-intersubjective interpretation may be sustainable on this level.

1 Destruction of the transcendental-foundational model

Some interpreters see Hegel's concept of *Geist* simply as a version of Kant's transcendental ego and programme.⁴ This is not entirely incorrect, since Hegel himself acknowledges Kant's influence and points out that the transcendental unity of apperception lies behind the *Begriff*.⁵ Nevertheless, it is more misleading than helpful to stress the similarities between *Geist* and Kant's transcendental ego. On the contrary, it is Hegel's conscious departure from Kant's transcendentalism that requires the terminological shift from transcendental ego to *Geist*. For when Hegel introduces the concept of *Geist* in the *Phenomenology*, he shows that *Geist* is not a transcendental structure *a priori*, an 'I think' that must accompany all representations, but rather a result, an intersubjective accomplishment. The transition from consciousness to self-consciousness is not simply a reflective accomplishment that the self can give to itself: rather, this transition is accomplished through the intersubjective process of recognition. Instead of a transcendental ego, Hegel speaks of an I that is also a We, and a We that is also an I.⁶ The significance of this departure from transcendental idealism (Kant) can best be appreciated by reference to Fichte and Hegel's critique of Fichte.

Fichte produced the term *Anerkennung* and with it first thematized the problem of intersubjectivity within German idealism. Specifically, he conceived *Anerkennung* as a transcendental condition of right, and offered the following transcendental deduction of intersubjectivity: 'The finite rational being cannot ascribe to itself a freedom efficacious in the external world, without also ascribing such freedom to others, and without assuming therefore the existence of other rational finite beings besides itself.' Note that this is a transcendental argument concerning freedom, not unlike Strawson's argument concerning persons and 'P-predicates'. A condition of ascribing freedom to oneself, or 'seeing oneself as free', is some prior consciousness of what freedom means in the case of others. The other is not inductively inferred, but rather co-implicated in the first-person consciousness of freedom as its transcendental condition. However, Fichte goes further than Strawson's 'merely transcendental' argument, which seems finally to culminate in a possible other. Fichte's step

is suggested in the above passage, namely, if the other is more than a transcendental condition of freedom, the other must exist. This point is further developed in Fichte's discussion of *Anerkennung*, which raises and pursues the problem of intersubjectivity within the framework of transcendental philosophy. Recall that Fichte relies on the Kantian moral philosophy, in which the existence and knowledge of freedom is problematic. Is freedom a postulate? Or is it a fact of reason? In either case, how is it possible to 'see oneself as free' or discover one's freedom? Kant apparently sticks to his general thesis of a denial of knowledge in order to make room for moral faith and freedom. Hence freedom is a belief, a postulate about the self which is inseparably bound up with the moral law. For Fichte, the self's consciousness of itself as free is synonymous with the problem of how the self can be an object for itself.

Fichte proposes that the self discovers itself as free only through being recognized by and recognizing others. Consequently, freedom is intersubjectively mediated. The self-consciousness of freedom is not attained simply through a reflective act.⁸ Since the self cannot objectify itself entirely, it cannot 'give' itself the full consciousness of itself as free. The self-consciousness of freedom requires something different from a reflective act: it requires that the self re-cognize itself through the mediation of an other. Fichte points out that the other is the source of requests and demands (*Aufforderungen*) that the self encounters. The other functions as a kind of ethical *Anstoß*, a summons to free self-activity. Through its response to requests, the self discovers its own freedom. But this consciousness of freedom is not reducible to having concepts *a priori*, or to having empirical intuitions. Neither the self nor its other are concepts or percepts in the sense of these terms established in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nevertheless, Fichte's whole discussion of *Anerkennung* occurs within, and probably explodes, his transcendental philosophical programme.

The question is, what is the significance of *Anerkennung* for Fichte's larger project of *Wissenschaftslehre* and practical philosophy? Fichte says that *Anerkennung* is a transcendental condition of natural law (*Naturrecht*). But now is this transcendental condition related to the ultimate transcendental condition, the absolute ego (*das Ich*) which is the first principle of the entire system? Clearly it is subordinate to the absolute ego, for Fichte regards *Anerkennung* as a *Bewußtseinshandlung* and *Bewußtsein* is a constituted, derivative level of Fichte's transcendental programme. Thus *Anerkennung* is only relatively, but not absolutely, *a priori*; it must be regarded as relative to and constituted by the transcendental ego. It is far from clear what such relativity and constitution might mean, partly because the status of the absolute ego is itself problematic. In the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, Fichte apparently regarded the transcendental ego as a postulate, and thus held a methodological rather than

an ontological idealism. Later, under the impact of *Atheismusstreit* and the need to integrate *Anerkennung* into his system, Fichte sought to address and clarify the issue of the ontological status of the absolute ego, which he came to identify not with the human ego, but with God. However, it is an open question whether this interpretation can incorporate, much less clarify, his conception of recognition.

In his *Differenzschrift* Hegel attacks Fichte, focusing on the apparent separation between transcendental and the empirical ego.⁹ Hegel points out that Fichte's basic speculative stance requires that he identify the transcendental with the empirical, thereby overcoming all contrast and deriving knowledge from a single unifying principle, the absolute identity – I am I. But Hegel complains that Fichte fails to unify the transcendental and the empirical, with the consequence that the reflective form of the system contradicts its speculative foundation or *Grundsatz*. Hegel identifies a fundamental problem in transcendental philosophy. On the one hand, it is necessary to distinguish the transcendental from the empirical ego in order to account for the possibility of actual knowledge and to ground its objective validity. The transcendental thus grounds the empirical, and is foundational for the empirical. Therefore the transcendental must not be identified or confused with the empirical. However, when the ontological implications of such a distinction are sought, then the question arises, who or what is the transcendental ego? If the transcendental ego is other than the human ego, the methodological dualism appears to turn into an ontological dualism. Is the transcendental ego then God? If so, does this not run the risk of lapsing into dogmatic metaphysics? Is the transcendence of God identifiable with the transcendence of the transcendental ego? Yet, if this step is not taken, what are the ontological foundations and grounds of the universality and necessity of knowledge? On the other hand, if the transcendental ego is identified with the human ego, then it is bound up and identified with finitude, existence and historicity. How then can the transcendental serve as a foundation? To identify the transcendental ego with the human subject is to give up the transcendental in the foundationalist sense. Either way, transcendental philosophy appears to be self-subverting – whether into dogmatic theological metaphysics (which ruins the transcendental method) or into an historical-cultural relativism (which retains the method but surrenders objective validity and universality).

What is Hegel's response to this dilemma? He does not remain in the halfway house of transcendental methodological idealism. But neither does he lapse into metaphysics (cf. the first attitude of thought towards objectivity in the *Encyclopaedia*). Rather, he abandons transcendental philosophy in the foundationalist *a priori* sense. Hegel retains transcendental moves, to be sure. But this is not a transcendental in the Kantian sense of a world-founding structure or world-constituting sense. The exact

sense of transcendental philosophy as it is retained in Hegel's version of identity-theory is obscure, and one reason for the obscurity is that the transcendental is no longer ontologically separate from the world. Whatever else may be meant, the transcendental has ceased to be an *a priori* condition or foundation of the phenomenal world, and has instead become a medium of access to the life-world. Transcendental deduction has been displaced by transcendental phenomenology, which describes and discovers the meaning of experience made by ordinary consciousness. The argument of Hegel's *Phenomenology* proceeds on the presupposition of the collapse of foundationalism: there is no absolute, unproblematic foundations or first principles with which to philosophize; the search for such first philosophy lies behind the Cartesian and Kantian transcendental turn, and it culminates in the *cul-de-sac* of knowing before you know. The only way out is not to enter in the first place, and so Hegelian phenomenology begins where Husserl eventually ended, namely, the turn of the life-world. The problem of foundations is not simply abandoned, but is rather displaced from the beginning of philosophy (the so-called first philosophy) to its end, i.e. to the results of philosophical labour. Critical subjectivity is not a given, but must be accomplished, brought about. The result of philosophical labour is not a transcendental ego purified of all empirical content, but rather something which is historically and culturally shaped, a developing foundation. What holds this notion of a non-foundational transcendental together with the equally strange notion of a developing foundation is *Geist*.

Thus Hegel takes over Fichte's account of *Anerkennung*, deepens it, and jettisons the transcendental philosophy. Purged of foundationalism, *Anerkennung* serves as the phenomenological account of the existential genesis of *Geist*.

Hegel on Anerkennung

A full account of Hegel's discussion of *Anerkennung* is not possible here. I am hoping to complete a book on this topic: the following summary will have to suffice. First I shall sketch the departure from transcendentalism which is required in order to understand *Anerkennung*. In transcendental philosophy, the transcendental subject is invoked as the *a priori* inclusive condition of possible experience. It prescribes and imposes conditions of appearance, carries and embeds universal structures, and performs acts of constitution which formally make experience possible. In order to do this the transcendental subject must be complete *a priori*, independent of experience. In it there can be no passivity or receptivity; as Fichte reiterates, nothing can be in or for the ego which is not posited by the ego. Hence there can be no reciprocity between that which founds and that which is founded.

With the introduction of *Anerkennung*, we migrate from transcendental

deductions to descriptive phenomenology and social ontology. The starting point of the various Hegelian accounts of recognition is not the disembodied transcendental ego of Cartesian heritage, but rather the embodied subject as desire (*Begierde*). Desire finds itself already in the world: the desiring subject is not complete and self-possessed in advance of experience; rather, it is empty and lacking. It needs to be filled by, and so is dependent on, its object (for example, food). However, desire is not satisfied when such natural needs and wants are satisfied. It is willing to risk its entire natural existence for something yet more important, namely, the recognition of its freedom. Hegel's break from Cartesian transcendentalism is the discovery that the self is dependent on other for recognition, specifically, the recognition of its freedom. Recognition is thus a condition of the discovery of freedom. If we may speak here of recognition as an *a priori* condition of freedom, this is a concrete life-world *a priori* and not an abstract *a priori*.

To be sure, Fichte had anticipated this in his account of recognition as a transcendental condition of natural law. Hegel proceeds further: human self-consciousness is accomplished in and through community, and is intersubjectivity mediated. Hence self-consciousness is essentially an intersubjective accomplishment. This accomplishment requires that the self wrench itself away from its merely natural existence, for freedom is decisively manifest only in the transcendence of natural existence. But precisely for this reason recognition is not a simple given, nor is it automatic. Recognition is jointly brought about only by overcoming prior moments of refusal and rejection. Hence recognition essentially involves and presupposes alienation, conflict and struggle, even where such elements are not present on the empirical level.

There are several different accounts of the struggle for recognition. The struggle assumes several different shapes and points of contention, for example, honour, property and recognition (as *τέλος* [*telos*]), itself, as the fundamental possibilities are considered in different empirical-cultural contexts. We follow Siep in distinguishing two levels (*Stufen*) of recognition, namely, a dyadic or I-I (or I-Thou) relation, and a triadic or I-We relation. The initial situation in the *Phenomenology* account is confrontation. Each self is naively and provincially self-certain, but absolutely uncertain about the other. This objective uncertainty is intolerable, and the self sees itself threatened with the loss of its own self-certainty. It seeks to elevate its private self-certainty to public truth by compelling the other to recognize. But, for reasons too subtle and complex to develop here, to struggle against the other is to struggle against oneself (the self is already dependent on the other, and it learns this in the course of the struggle). Hence, if the other is simply annihilated, the quest or recognition has ended in failure. The first phase (*Stufe*) of the process of recognition stops short of annihilation, but also short of full recognition.

One side gives up its demand for recognition in exchange for survival. Thereby it shows its inability to transcend the merely natural level of existence. It recognizes the other as master, while the master recognizes it not as co-equal, but only as thing, as slave. Here we have the unequal one-sided form of recognition, the dyadic model of master and slave. Since the unequal form of recognition contradicts the fundamentally social, interdependent nature of the self, it is an imperfect, unstable relationship. The ideal goal of recognition, its *τέλος*, is mutual reciprocal recognition. 'A one-sided action is useless, because what is supposed to occur can come about only through the reciprocal and mutual action of both . . . They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing and recognized.'¹⁰

In such reciprocal recognition a new social reality is brought about which is more than the sum of its parts. Since the new reality cannot be accomplished by the single action of any one of its members, or controlled by any one of its members, it transcends while including the original self-consciousness. Conversely, the original self-consciousness undergoes not a loss of being but rather an expansion: the I becomes a We, and is propelled forward into an open future as a member of the community. Hegel terms this new social reality *Geist*:

Since a self-consciousness is here the object, it is both I-subject and at the same time I-object. With this the concept of *Geist* presents itself to us for the first time. Consciousness will subsequently experience what this *Geist* is, this absolute ethical substance which in perfect freedom and independence of its opposites – namely different independently existing self-consciousnesses – is the unity of such opposites: the I that is We and the We that is I.¹¹

With the accomplishment of the second level of recognition, consciousness undergoes expansion: self-consciousness is not merely a simple form of consciousness which the self can reflectively give to itself; rather, self-consciousness equally and essentially depends upon the mediation of others. Hence self-consciousness and the full self-identity are not to be confused or identified with products of reflection or intellectual constructs *a priori*; rather, they are intersubjectively mediated. To be sure, they cannot come about if the self is not a consciousness, or otherwise lacks an existence for itself. But neither is self-consciousness in Hegel's sense possible if the self is *only* a being-for-itself. Being for self is thus a necessary condition of intersubjective recognition, but it is not the sole or sufficient condition.

Further, it is important to note that the social self or We moves beyond the dyadic or I-I relation of master/slave. Instead of a dyadic structure the We has a triadic structure of twofold or double mediation. In the

joint two-sided process of recognition, each side is both an extreme standing in opposition and contrast to its other, and at the same time it is the mediator through which the other self is recognized (or fails to find recognition). It is important to see this twofold mediation; for unless the intersubjective mediation is twofold we have only the dyadic unequal form of recognition. When the twofold mediation occurs, there emerges a third over above the original two selves, namely, the We, or social self. The We is the result of this process of twofold mediation, and for his reason the We must be distinguished from a transcendental consciousness or structure. As the concrete universal which is inclusive of and the result of the joint action of its members, the We is a social infinite. This is perhaps Hegel's major contribution to philosophy: the social infinite or community principle is a distinctive kind of being, which is irreducible to the standard subject-object epistemology and its categories, or to the standard 'first-person' and 'third-person' approaches to the philosophy of mind.¹²

To conclude this section, the claim is that Hegel is not doing transcendental philosophy in the traditional Kantian foundationalist sense – that *Geist* is not a transcendental ego, but rather an intersubjective-social self resulting from reciprocal recognition. The introduction of the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) compels the displacement or drastic modification of transcendental philosophy by depriving transcendental subjectivity of its foundational status. The transcendental is retained, if at all, in a more modest sense of being a medium of access to other-being. Further, other-being is not merely a negation; it is a co-partner in bringing about the We. The question remains whether intersubjectivity is merely one phase in the development of *Geist* which is passed through and left behind, or whether *Geist* on all its levels is essentially an intersubjective social infinite. How is the *Phenomenology* related to the *Encyclopaedia*? The later philosophy of *Geist* appears to de-emphasize the term *Anerkennung*. This invites the question, whether there could be a *Geist* which is not social, which is not a social infinite. Is that how the distinction between objective and absolute *Geist* is to be understood? I think not.

2 Hegel's concept of Absolute Geist

Obviously, justice cannot be done to the topic in the limited space remaining. I shall sketch with broad strokes and present my case in a highly vulnerable but I hope suggestive form. The problem is first to determine how Hegel conceives absolute spirit in the light of our earlier analysis of *Geist* as intersubjective. Second, what is the ontological interpretation of *Geist*? Does Hegel develop his understanding of absolute *Geist* as intersubjective? In the *Phenomenology* there is no question but that the

answer is affirmative. For when Hegel introduces the concept of *Geist* he introduces it as the accomplishment of mutual reciprocal recognition: 'The word of reconciliation is the concrete existing *Geist*, which intuitively knows itself as universal being in its counterpart, namely the pure knowing of itself as absolute particular. *This is a mutual (gegenseitiges) Anerkennen which is the absolute Geist.*'¹³

However, with Hegel matters are seldom so clear-cut that one text alone settles an issue. Jürgen Habermas in an important essay¹⁴ observes that Hegel has perhaps two different modes of *Geist*. One is an intersubjective model, in which *Geist* serves not as a foundation but as a communication medium; i.e. an intersubjective medium of access. The other model is identified by Habermas as the idealist model, in which the infinite is an infinite accomplished in reflection, not a social infinite. In this case absolute *Geist* is conceived as a transcendental subject which unconsciously produces nature, and then rediscovers itself in its investigation of nature, and thereby returns to itself (i.e. becomes self-conscious) out of nature as its other. But nature as the other of the absolute turns out to be an other which is not-other; for nature is the absolute itself in alienated or estranged form. That is why Hegel can speak of a return to self out of other and treat this as a logical double negation, or negation of negation. Habermas thinks that the latter idealist model of *Geist* cannot do justice to the intersubjective dimension, because the absolute *Geist*, like Kant's transcendental ego, is solitary (*einsamer*). This vision of unity and infinity is haunted by solipsism because its other is not a *Gegenspieler* but merely an epistemological *Gegenbild*.¹⁵ Habermas' thesis that Hegel has two different, if not incompatible, models of *Geist* deserves serious attention and scrutiny.

Granting Habermas' distinction, from each model of *Geist* a different sense of the concept and its self-identity emerges. In the idealist model the self-identical unity of *Geist* is reflectively achieved in pure self-transparency, I am I.¹⁶ This self-identical unity is pure knowledge, and no intersubjective mediation is necessary. Conversely, the intersubjective model of *Geist* requires intersubjective mediation; this is not simply an I am I, but rather an I that is a We, a social infinite. These different models may not in the final analysis be mutually exclusive, as Habermas seems to think, but they are surely distinct, and they are both present in Hegel's writings from early to late.

Michael Theunissen shows that both concepts of *Geist* are present in the late philosophy of *Geist*. In his study, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*,¹⁷ Theunissen takes account of Habermas' distinction, sharpens it, and brings out what is apparently a confusion on Hegel's part. For if we take the intersubjective model of *Geist* as fundamental, then transcendental subjectivity plays no foundational role; it is a medium of access to being, or a communication

medium. Reflection is derivative from this concrete context. But in the later system Hegel apparently inverted this relationship and constructed the doctrine of absolute *Geist* not as social but rather on the idealist model. The absolute subject, in relating itself to others, is in fact only relating to itself.¹⁸ Theunissen thus finds Hegel inconsistently holding two different concepts of absolute *Geist*:

Hegel is never able to clarify satisfactorily the relation between the *Geist* which functions as medium, and the *Geist* which is the self-consciousness which comprehends the intersubjective medium. And a satisfactory explanation is excluded in principle because a series of explanations which refers us from God to *Geist*, from *Geist* to self-consciousness, from self-consciousness to a self-identity which is constituted by finding oneself in another, and then a final explanation which sums up the whole series as comprehended and unified by a single self-consciousness, is incapable of explaining the [intersubjective] medium.¹⁹

Given this analysis, the confusion is serious: Hegel may have no coherent doctrine of *Geist*. Theunissen's excursus on Bruno Bauer makes it evident that the Left Hegelians divided from Hegel precisely on the issues raised by this apparent confusion. Hegel's theology in this interpretation – ultimately a version of Spinoza and Aristotle – ruins his intersubjectivity theory and lapses into substance metaphysics. Given the choice between a theory of absolute spirit in which substance becomes subject, and an intersubjective theory of spirit which points towards the formation of a community of freedom, Bauer opts for the latter over against the former. Theunissen shows that Hegel is hardly defenceless against the left-wing interpretation, but that issue does not concern us here. Instead, let us examine the two different concepts of *Geist* which will occur side by side in the late philosophy of spirit, for this will show that perhaps there is ambiguity in Hegel's thought on this topic.

One text which manifests the ambiguity in the late philosophy is the following paragraph from the *Encyclopaedia*, which introduces the concept of absolute *Geist*:

The absolute *Geist* is both an identity which is ever returning and ever returned into itself. It is the one and universal substance which as spiritual (*geistige*) exists as a judgment in itself and a knowing for which it is as such. Religion, as this highest sphere may in general be characterized, is to be considered also from two perspectives. First, as proceeding from the subject, and as it exists in the subject. Second, as objectively proceeding from the absolute *Geist*, which is *Geist* in its community.²⁰

It appears that in the first sentence *Geist* is conceived on the idealist model. On the other hand, the last sentence appears to conceive *Geist* on the intersubjective model as *Geist in seiner Gemeinde*. The English translation confirms this ambiguity by translating *Geist* as 'mind' in the first sentence, and as 'spirit' in the last sentence. All the basic Hegelian terminology – being-for-other, return-to-self-out-of-other, to be at-home-with-the-self-in-other, the other as *aufgehoben* – depends for its significance on which sense of *Geist* is meant and which sense is fundamental. Until such determination can be exclusively made, we do not know whether we have to do with an absolute *Geist* which is to be understood as the a-cosmic pantheism of Spinoza, or a social-intersubjective ontology of community which may displace the traditional concept of God but is not reducible to anthropology (Feuerbach). Hence the interpretative problem: is absolute *Geist* a substantial infinite which comes to expression in pure self-transparency (*Ich bin Ich*)? Hegel's repeated citation of Aristotle may point in this direction, in which case Hegel rejoins and sums up the Western intellectualist tradition. Or is absolute *Geist* rather a social infinite? If the 'other' means an intersubjective other, then the manifestation and expression of absolute *Geist* is equivalent to the creation of an intersubjective community. The We is a new social self or community which is not simply a rendering explicit of what *Geist an sich* already (implicitly) is. Obviously this reading has implications for the significance and place of history in Hegel's system. In this reading, the *Aufhebung* of the other is not an elimination of the other by reduction to the primordial identity of I am I; rather, it is the elevation of the self and its other into community. In the final analysis Hegel's absolute *Geist* is not a pure I am I, but rather *Geist in seiner Gemeinde*.

I should like to conclude with three observations concerning Theunissen's commentary on absolute *Geist*. First, Theunissen suggests (perhaps following Habermas) that Hegel's two concepts of *Geist* are incompatible. Hence one must pick and choose. Picking and choosing means deciding which is primary and which is derivative. Habermas claims that if the idealist model of *Geist* is primary, it is impossible to derive a plausible concept of *Geist* in the social-intersubjective sense. Hence it would appear that Habermas and possibly Theunissen would defend the proposition that idealist subjectivity must be taken as derivative from intersubjectivity, and not the other way around. I think that this proposition is false. Rather, it would seem that subjectivity and intersubjectivity are correlative, reciprocal notions. It is not as if self-consciousness is 'created' by intersubjectivity or is merely a small slice of intersubjectivity, for a condition of being-for-other is being-for-self. So all the cognitive apparatus which Hegel analyses in the sections devoted to consciousness (*Bewußtsein*) must be functioning if the self is to perceive and respond to the other. Hence intersubjective apprehension presupposes subjectivity

(reason, imagination, sensibility, etc.). On the other hand, given Hegel's critique of foundationalism, the archaeology of the subject which he sets forth in the *Phenomenology* and *Encyclopaedia* must not be mistaken for a new foundation from which intersubjectivity is to be 'transcendentally deduced'. Hegel's original contribution to this discussion is to show that a condition of being-for-self is being-for-other, that the self depends for its very being on the other. Hence it is crucial to distinguish the naive, immediate self-identity of being for self from the full self-identity which is mediated by and won through the intersubjective struggle for recognition. The former sense of subjectivity is Cartesian; in the latter Hegelian conception of self-identity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are equi-primordial, reciprocal conceptions.

Second, Theunissen's discussion prescinds from the whole topic of *Anerkennung* as the existential origin of *Geist*. This undoubtedly makes it easier to drive a wedge between the idealist model of *Geist* and the intersubjective model. For in the later writings not only does *Geist* play a lesser role than in the 1807 *Phenomenology*, but *Anerkennung* seems to be restricted to accounting for the genesis of objective *Geist*. This creates the impression that Hegel abandons the intersubjective model of *Geist* to anthropology, and that his concept of absolute *Geist* is out-and-out idealism. The ultimate significance of absolute *Geist* according to this interpretation is to be found in Neoplatonism. However, there is another interpretation which is possible. Although *Anerkennung* is downplayed somewhat in the later writings, it does not disappear entirely. The earlier suggestions in the *Phenomenology* that Hegel conceived the divine-human relationship to be one of recognition are still present in the *Encyclopaedia* and later *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. For *Anerkennung* implies intersubjective reciprocity and mutuality, and these features are very much present in the so-called 'late' accounts. Consider, for example, the aphorisms of C. F. Goschel which Hegel cites with obvious approval:

To understand what God as *Geist* is – to apprehend this accurately and distinctly in thoughts – requires careful and thorough speculation. It includes in its forefront the following propositions: God is God only insofar as he knows himself, his self-knowing is further a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which proceeds to the self-knowing of man in God.²¹

Whatever else this passage might mean, it seems to require a conception of the divine-human relation as intersubjective, and this suggests that *Anerkennung* is presupposed even if the term itself is not used. The same conception of absolute *Geist* as fundamentally social is to be found in the lectures on the proofs for the existence of God:

If in fact religion is to be understood only as relation from us to God, this conception would not permit a being of God independent of human consciousness; God would exist only in religion as something posited and produced by us . . . but a one-sided relation is no relation at all . . . In the religious relation it is implied not merely that we stand in relation to God, but also that God stands in relation to us.²²

Hegel would land in flat self-contradiction if the two-sided reciprocal relation of *Anerkennung* were to collapse into the pure identity of the *Ich bin Ich*. That would mean that the *Aufhebung* of the other is tantamount to its elimination. I believe that Hegel intends to say that the *Aufhebung* of the other means the elevation of the self and other into community: the *Aufhebung* of the other means the constitution of the We, or the divine *Geist in seiner Gemeinde*. Hence *Anerkennung* leads not to a restoration of a primordial identity, but to a totality. For only a totality can maintain the other as not-other (i.e. as non-alien) without eliminating the other *per se*.

Third, not only does Theunissen fail to take up the topic of *Anerkennung*, but he operates with a deficient conception of intersubjectivity. He appears to have a dialogue or I-Thou conception of intersubjectivity, which has a dyadic structure. This is not entirely incorrect, but it corresponds only to the first level (*Stufe*) of recognition. I believe that Theunissen has some such dialogue model of intersubjectivity in mind when he criticizes Hegel for not explaining satisfactorily how *Geist* can be both medium of access to the other and the comprehension of the whole, the We, i.e. how can it be both the medium of apprehension and the medium as comprehended?²³ This is to ask how intersubjectivity relates to or bears upon traditional epistemology. If one remains with the dialogue model of intersubjectivity, one is virtually imprisoned within a first-person account of other minds. By its very nature this account is restricted, one-sided. On such assumptions it is difficult to see any solution to the so-called 'problem of other minds'. But it should be noted that Hegel's conception of intersubjectivity as *Geist* is much richer than the dialogue model. For although *Anerkennung* begins with the I-I relationship, this is not its goal. The goal is mutual reciprocal recognition in which the I becomes a We, which implies the formation of an enduring social self or totality. This point comes out in Hegel's discussion of the social institution of marriage, which begins at the standpoint of a contract between two independent individuals, but whose τέλος is to transcend the merely individualistic standpoint of contract. That is what *Geist* and *Sittlichkeit* are all about.

Hegel thus has resources for meeting Theunissen's objection. For the I that is a We is *both* a particular extreme of the I-I intersubjective relation which excludes the other extreme *and* the We which arises out

of the entire mutual-reciprocal relation. The *τέλος* of recognition is precisely the mutual reciprocity between selves which comprise the new universal-social consciousness. It is precisely the formation of the We, the social self and community, which takes Hegel's discussion of *Geist* beyond a merely impersonal dialogue and beyond the nominalistic conception of persons as atomic individuals. The dyadic structure of the dialogue model is inadequate to conceive or portray the meaning of *Geist*. Since *Geist* is constituted through a process of mutual-reciprocal recognition in which each is both extreme and mediator, *Geist* must be conceived as a social infinite with a triadic structure. Hegel's retention of the language of trinity (but not the classical Christian doctrine of trinity) is not simply a nostalgia for the past, or a convenient illustration of an abstract idea; rather, it is a phenomenologically orientated social ontology. Hegel's so-called absolute idealism may not finally exclude the intersubjective model of *Geist*; rather, it is the theoretical expression of Hegel's theory of *Sittlichkeit*, with its central conception of *Geist* as social infinite. Perhaps no one has understood this better than Josiah Royce in his book *The Problem of Christianity*.²⁴

Notes

1 Ludwig Siep, *Anerkennung als Prinzip der praktischen Philosophie: Untersuchungen zu Hegels Jenaer Philosophie des Geistes* (Freiburg/ München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1979).

2 Michael Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1970); Andreas Wildt, *Autonomie und Anerkennung: Hegels Moralkritik im Lichte seiner Fichte-Rezeption* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982).

3 See Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. by D. Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972); *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by D. Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel Barnes (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1956).

4 See J. N. Findlay's Foreword to *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, the English translation of Part III of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). See also R. C. Solomon, 'Hegel's Concept of "Geist"', in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. MacIntyre (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972). Solomon's essay is a condescending caricature which fails to deal with Hegel's fundamental notions and intentions. It is typical of the difficulties Hegel's thought has had in finding understanding, critical or sympathetic, in English-speaking countries.

5 G. W. F. Hegel *Wissenschaft der Logik, Werke: Theorie Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), Vol. 6, p. 254. Hereafter cited as *Werke*, Sk. 6:254.

6 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Sk.3: 144ff, Hoffmeister Ausgabe (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 140: English translation, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 110.

7 J. G. Fichte, *Grundlage des Naturrechts nach Principien der Wissenschaftslehre*, Werke, hrsg. I. H. Fichte, Band III (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), p. 30.

8 For Fichte's critique of reflection theory and the Cartesian tradition, see Dieter Henrich, 'Fichte's Original Insight', trans. D. Lachterman, in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, Vol. I, ed. D. Christensen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982).

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*, Werke, 2:52ff.; English translation, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977).

10 Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, Sk.3:146ff.; Hoffmeister, 142–3; English translation 112.

11 *ibid.*, Sk.3:144; Hoffmeister 140; English translation 112.

12 For example, Jerome Shaffer in his *Philosophy of Mind* (Prentice-Hall Foundations in Philosophy Series) writes as if the so-called first-person and third-person approaches to mind exhaust all possible forms of inquiry. Behind this view lies a crucial presupposition, namely, that mind is to be interpreted nominalistically, i.e. the presupposition that persons are atomic individuals existing in independent isolation. However, as an I that is also a We, *Geist* transcends the first-person and third-person alternatives. The nominalistic assumption is challenged by all philosophers in German idealism, and decisively rejected by Hegel. But this assumption pervades much contemporary philosophy. In addition to Shaffer's discussion noted above, cf. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This is widely regarded as a first-person orientation on both the empirical and transcendental levels. This in turn creates the impression that the performer of transcendental intentionality is an individual. No wonder Husserl is worried about solipsism as a transcendental problem! In my view it is more misleading than helpful to retain the terminology of the transcendental subject in thinking about *Geist*, as does Merold Westphal in his recent book *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1980). For *Geist* is not so much an answer to Westphal's question of 'who is the transcendental subject?' as it is a dissolution of the presuppositions of that question.

13 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, Sk.3:493; Hoffmeister, 471; English translation 408.

14 Jürgen Habermas, 'Arbeit und Interaktion: Bemerkungen zu Hegels *Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes*', in G. W. F. Hegel *Frühe politische Systeme*, hrsg. Gerhard Gohler (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1974), pp. 786ff [translation reprinted in volume II, pp. 558–81. R. S.]

15 *ibid.*, p. 808.

16 This is the 'standard interpretation' of idealism. However, in view of Henrich's challenging but obscure article ('Fichte's Original Insight' – see n. 8 above), the standard interpretation needs revision. On the other hand, Habermas himself seems to adopt the standard interpretation in reference to Hegel's concept of absolute *Geist*.

17 Theunissen, op. cit.

18 *ibid.*, p. 57.

19 *ibid.*, p. 58.

20 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, hrsg. Nicolai und Pöggeler (Hamburg: Meiner, 1959), p. 440; Sk. 10:336; English translation 292. The English translation is here virtually unsuitable for critical work, for Wallace translates *Geist* as 'mind' in the first sentence, and as 'spirit'

in the last. This shows how difficult it is to translate Hegel; not only does the English language lack a suitable term to translate *Geist*, but it probably lacks the concept as well. In this particular case the translator has deprived the reader of an important interpretative decision by concealing the fact that Hegel uses the same word in the two cases. Wallace's different translations of *Geist* first as 'mind' and then as 'spirit' tend to confirm the ambiguity in the concept of *Geist* even as this ambiguity is concealed from the English reader.

21 *ibid.*, p. 447; Sk. 10:317ff.; English translation 298.

22 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*, Sk. 17:382ff. This text is a further commentary and elaboration on the Goschel aphorisms cited in the preceding quotation. This strengthens my case that Hegel has *Anerkennung* or something like it in mind, even though the term is absent from the passage.

23 See above, n. 19.

24 Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1913).